

Kashmiri marchers halted, says official

ISLAMABAD (R) — Pakistani authorities said on Tuesday they had halted a march by thousands of Kashmiris to cross an Indian-defended ceasefire line in their disputed state. Pakistan-ruled Azad (free) Kashmir's Prime Minister Sardar Abdul Qayyum, quoted by the state-run radio Pakistan, said the marchers were halted at the town Chinari near the border. He said about 15,000 people had reached Chinari to cross the ceasefire line "but they were stopped from proceeding further." There was no immediate word if the marchers, who had earlier begun the march from the state capital of Muzaffarabad in defiance of a government ban, had clashed with police or army, which is responsible for keeping the peace near the border. But Mr. Qayyum said the marchers clashed with police at two other border points in another district. Some people were injured in the "police action" at Madaripur, he said. A foreign ministry spokesman in Islamabad said the government was fully determined to enforce its decision to prevent the marchers from "reaching and crossing the line of control."

Jordan Times

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Sudan official leaves Egypt, hopes for better ties

CAIRO (R) — Sudan's second in command left Cairo on Tuesday after tough questioning by Egyptian leaders on his government's links with extremist Muslim fundamentalists. Major-General Al Zubeir Mohammad Saleh described his talks with President Hosni Mubarak and other officials, the highest level contacts between the two neighbours for 18 months, as very frank. He said he hoped the two sides could end what he called the recent coldness in relations. "There are no differences in point of views but rather suspicions," Gen. Saleh, deputy chairman of Sudan's ruling Revolutionary Command Council, told reporters at Cairo airport. Official sources said Mr. Mubarak told Mr. Saleh on Monday his government should distance itself from Muslim fundamentalist groups, especially those led by the charismatic intellectual Hassan Tourabi. Egyptian officials believe Mr. Tourabi is the effective ruler of Sudan and is sponsoring Muslim extremist groups which could destabilise pro-Western countries such as Egypt.

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Dumas to visit Syria on Thursday

PARIS (R) — French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas will hold talks in Syria on Thursday, seven weeks after his visit was postponed in a diplomatic row over a wanted Nazi war criminal. Foreign ministry spokesman Daniel Bernard said Mr. Dumas would meet President Hafez Al Assad, Vice President Abdul Halim Khaddam and Foreign Minister Farouq Al Shara in Damascus. Mr. Dumas had been due to visit Syria on Dec. 19 and 20 but the trip was called off at the last minute after Mr. Assad made it known that he would not be available to meet him.

Egypt holds antiquities addressed to Saudi princess

CAIRO (R) — The authorities at Cairo airport have held up a shipment of antiquities and jewels addressed to a Saudi Arabian princess and valued at millions of dollars, customs officers said on Tuesday. Egyptian law severely restricts the export of antiquities and valuables purchased locally. The officers said experts from the antiquities department and Cairo museum were inspecting the shipment, which included ancient copper vases, to check the origin of the items.

Kuwait bans foreign oil observers

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait said on Tuesday it would not accept foreign observers to monitor its all-male parliamentary election scheduled for October. "It is out of the question to enlist the help of foreign observers to monitor national assembly elections," Justice Minister Ghazi Obeid Al Sammar told the Kuwait news agency Kuna. "The Kuwaiti minister stressed the purely internal nature of this issue and expressed certainty that the honourable citizens are fully aware of the fairness of the judicial system," Kuna said.

U.S. congressmen protest Iranian stamp

WASHINGTON (AP) — A bipartisan group of 66 members of the House of Representatives has written Secretary of State James Baker to complain about an anti-Israel postage stamp issued by Iran. The stamp shows a child holding a stone through a sheet of glass inscribed with the words "The child of the child, 1991." That is an apparent reference to the United Nations holiday devoted to promoting the welfare of children. The lawmakers, led by Rep. Wayne Owens, asked Mr. Baker to "register a forceful protest" with Iran and to seek to limit the stamp's distribution because it violates international postal conventions.

Britain, Kuwait sign defence accord

LONDON (R) — Kuwait and Britain signed a defence accord on Tuesday which British firms hope will lead to new arms orders from the Gulf emirate. The memorandum of understanding was signed in London by their defence ministers, Kuwait's Sheikh Ali Sabah Al Salim Al Sabah and Britain's Tom King. The British defence ministry said the accord opened the way for detailed agreements on equipment sales, the supply of information to Kuwait by British military experts and combined training and exercises by their forces. Kuwait signed a similar agreement with the United States last year and plans one with France.

Habash's health is improving

TUNIS (R) — The health of Palestinian leader George Habash, whose medical treatment in France caused a political storm before he was taken back to Tunisia, is improving, a medical bulletin said on Tuesday. "There is no need for any concern over his state of health which is constantly improving," said Mr. Habash's personal physician, Mohammad Chihab-Eddine.

Warm air, occasional sun coming

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Weather will gradually improve and the Kingdom is expected to be under the effect of a humid and relatively warm mass of air blowing from the Mediterranean, but no snow-

storms are forecast, the Meteorology Department said Tuesday.

Department Acting Director Rafiq Jamil Shaker said in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that until Friday evening there would be a gradual rise in temperatures with a

chance of showers and partly cloudy skies broken at times by sunny conditions.

Frost and ice will continue to form in the desert and on high mountainous regions with the formation of fog in the wadis due to melting of snow, Mr. Shaker forecast.

He said that the relatively warm and humid weather will help melt the snow and the ice, adding that the temperatures were expected to reach seven degrees Wednesday.

Mr. Shaker reported that the total amount of rain water falling on Jordan was far higher than the annual average with the accumulated amount had reached 860 millimetres with the least rainfall registered at Al Jafer desert region in the southeast.

Frost and ice in the last two days caused numerous incidents and road accidents most of which were dealt with by the Civil Defence Department (CDD). The CDD said in a statement to Petra that its personnel dealt with 380 incidents in the past 24 hours up to noon Tuesday including the rescuing of 64 people besieged by snow at home or in their cars.

The incidents, according to Petra, included fires at home caused by heaters and broken bones due to falls on the icy road. Only one death was reported.

But Al Dostour daily Tuesday, quoted CDD Director General Afif Al Ghoul as saying that the stormy weather in the past two days caused the death of 24 people, including three cases of drowning.

The Armed Forces reported that its road clearing equipment had Tuesday completed the task of reopening the main roads. These included the University of

Cabinet evaluates losses, approves compensation scheme

AMMAN (Petra) — The council of ministers Tuesday passed three important decisions designed to deal with the consequences of the snowstorms that hit Jordan in the past two months.

The cabinet requested the concerned ministers to speed up measures designed to repair damages affecting public utilities and the infrastructure. Questions related to funding the repair work should be coordinated with the minister of finance and the funds should be cut from allocations originally assigned to the concerned departments, a statement following the cabinet meeting said.

It said that steps are to be taken to ease the burdens on the people whose properties

and agricultural crops were severely damaged or flooded by the water or affected by the frosty weather. In this connection small farmers will have access to long term interest-free loans from the Agricultural Credit Corporation (ACC) and the Treasury — 25 per cent and 75 per cent respectively. Farmers will be given sufficient grace periods before paying back their dues.

Other farmers, the statement said, will get help from the ACC and the Treasury under regular terms provided that the loans be used for the purchase of equipment and other input required to replace those damaged by the weather conditions.

The statement said that needy people who sustained

property losses will also be compensated through the National Aid Fund.

The cabinet also decided to embark on measures designed to set up an agricultural insurance fund and to build more dams to collect water for the dry season.

The decisions were taken at a full cabinet session chaired by Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker during which a report by the special ministerial committee on the consequences of the snowstorms was reviewed. The report covered damages to roads, bridges, culverts, electricity, telephone, water and irrigation networks and other facilities, and public installations in addition to damages to agricultural crops.



Unprepared for such harsh weather conditions, a driver kneels on the frosty road to change a flat tyre during the snowstorm that hit the country in the last three days (photo by Youssef Al 'Allan)

Israeli housing units in occupied territories far less than claimed

WASHINGTON (R) — U.S. Secretary of State James Baker has told the Israeli ambassador that Israel is building only 5,700 to 6,000 housing units in the occupied territories, far fewer than it claims, the Washington Post said on Tuesday.

The paper said Ambassador Zalman Shoval told Mr. Baker in talks last Friday that Israel had 13,000 housing units under way on the West Bank and Gaza Strip. It said Mr. Baker based his estimate on U.S. intelligence information.

There have been a wide range of unofficial estimates, from as low as 3,000 to well over 13,000. Israel needs U.S. financial help to obtain \$10 billion on favourable terms from commercial banks to help resettle tens of thousands of Jews from the Soviet Union and Ethiopia.

The United States has suggested it is willing to accept completion of those units already under way in the occupied territories, but sees more building as an obstacle to peace in the Middle East.

The Post said Mr. Baker apparently did not make an explicit demand on the number of units the United States would go along with, but implied that Israel should accept a ceiling of 6,000 in Palestinian-populated areas.

Health Minister Ehud Olmert, a close ally of Prime Minister

Yitzhak Shamir and frequent spokesman for government policy, on Monday accused U.S. President George Bush of deliberately provoking a confrontation.

He said in Jerusalem that he no longer expected that Israel would receive the U.S. loan guarantees.

"I am not very optimistic on the chances to agree on the loan guarantees," Mr. Olmert told visiting Jewish Americans.

Mr. Olmert accused Washington of taking the side of Arab states over the occupied land. He said the dispute over loan guarantees was part of a strategy by Mr. Bush to force Israel to return all Arab land occupied in the 1967 Middle East war.

The United States has presented Israel with such tough conditions on its request for the loan guarantees that some Jewish leaders now believe a compromise deal may not be possible.

Mr. Baker Friday handed Mr. Shoval Washington's conditions for the loan guarantees.

"The United States has toughened its position and also indicated that there was little room for negotiation on its demands," said one source familiar with the meeting.

Mr. Baker demanded that Israel stop building new housing in Jewish settlements in occupied territories in the West Bank and

Gaza Strip. He also said the United States would deduct a dollar for every dollar Israel spent completing houses already under construction or building roads or other support facilities in the Jewish settlements.

"The deductibility would apply to all money spent in the territories, on public and private housing and on infrastructure," said the source.

Taken to its logical conclusion, that could mean any spending on roads or industry or even schools, sewage and health facilities in the settlements could exact its price in reduced American aid.

Mr. Baker, in a weekend television interview, also hinted that deductibility might be applied in the future to Israel's regular annual U.S. aid allowance of \$3 billion.

Asked if the United States was still conditioning settlements if it allowed Israel to complete the 9,000 housing units it has under construction in the territories, Mr. Baker replied:

"I don't think you are if such an agreement were coupled with an understanding or a requirement that new construction activity would stop and anything that was completed would, in effect, have to be accounted for dollar for dollar from other assistance — or from assistance to Israel."

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8 policemen killed in Algeria; alleged culprits holding hostages

ALGIERS (Agencies) — Killers of two policemen took worshippers hostage in a mosque outside Algiers on Tuesday and defied security forces ringing the building, Algiers radio said.

The radio said the men, widely believed to be Muslim fundamentalists, took their hostages who were at prayer in Bordj Menaïel, some 80 kilometres east of the capital.

Eight policemen were killed in separate attacks in Algeria on Monday, only hours after Mohammed Boudiaf, head of the five-man presidency, imposed a national state of emergency after battles between security forces and Islamic militants.

"The murderers of the two policemen at Bordj Menaïel are cut off in the mosque where they took the faithful hostage at the start of the afternoon," the radio said.

Security forces launched a massive manhunt after the police were killed, six mown down by automatic weapons fire in two ambushes in Algiers, and two stabbed in Bordj Menaïel.

The Bordj Menaïel attackers were said to be accomplices of a man arrested in an operation to net Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) activists, blamed by authorities for widespread violence.

The FIS, now facing dissolu-

tion, challenges the legitimacy of the new rulers who took over after cancellation of a general election the party was set to win.

Monday's killings in Algiers, attributed to Afghan war veterans, were the first apparently deliberate ambush of police since the election was scrapped.

FIS supporters demand Algeria's 25 million people live in an Islamic state under Sharia law, a message they spread from mosques until security forces moved in to enforce a ban on mosque politics.

Rioting erupted in a score of towns as mosque preachers were jailed. Mr. Boudiaf said some 50 people had been killed. Hospital, security and other sources said about 300 people were wounded.

Algerian fundamentalists who fought or trained with rebels in Afghanistan attacked security forces before the election last year. Defence Minister Khaled Nezzar said they were indirectly linked to the FIS.

"The state of emergency is to combat these people who seek to provoke disorder. The men of the FIS are not for dialogue. When I stretched out my hand, they sent only a threatening letter," Mr. Boudiaf told the nation.

Foreign diplomats in Algiers said that if the FIS was banned, its supporters could have no option but to go underground. The

independent newspaper El Watan said the FIS had "launched into terrorism" in reaction to the state of siege.

Algiers radio said continuing clashes had killed two more police on Monday at Dellys, 90 kilometres east of Algiers.

The cabinet met in crisis session on Monday under Prime Minister Sid Ahmad Ghazali to tackle the fast-changing upheaval.

The state of emergency, imposed for 12 months, gives the interior minister sweeping powers to order searches of homes, ban movement of people, close public places, order military trials and set up detention centres.

Mr. Ghazali said ministers were preparing a programme "to lighten the effects on the population of the general crisis which the country is going through."

Some of the problems of daily life were to be seen in the Casbah on Tuesday. In the main Avenue Areski Bouzina, where the police were killed, women staggered home with stocks of oil and spaghetti, newly arrived in the state market.

Officials from banks and nearby offices slipped out to stock up before the holy month of Ramadan, as youths sold black market cigarettes, peanuts, smuggled clothes and Chinese trinkets in the crowded narrow lanes.

Speaking late Monday on Algerian television, Mr. Boudiaf condemned the FIS for using mosques to incite young people to fight security forces.

"Unfortunately clashes occurred and blood was spilled. This is something nobody can accept," he said. "These young people who kill their brothers are being deluded. What is the difference between this soldier and this youngster?"

The FIS, in a communique, called on Algerians to reject the emergency measures announced Sunday, vowing that a national protest march would be held as planned Friday.

"Don't give up," the front exhorted followers in the statement Monday, urging them to claim their political rights. "Rest assured, the Islamic cause will emerge victorious whatever the sacrifices."

The communique was signed by information director Abdul Razak Rajam, whose arrest had been reported by state radio. It was not known whether he was in custody although most of the front's other leaders are in jail.

The call for defiance came on a day when calm was largely reported in the capital, Algiers. However, Monday's attacks on the police were the most deadly

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Saudi authorities crack down on militant Islamists

Special from Riyadh

SAUDI ARABIA'S ultra-conservative regime, caught between domestic and external pressure to liberalise the kingdom and internal calls for stricter adherence to Islamic principles, has cracked down on militant Islamic zealots. But the government has denied it has arrested opposition members.

An unnamed government spokesman told the Saudi press agency last week that concerning Western and Arab press reports "about detention and differences in opinion in Saudi Arabia, we reaffirm anew that all these are categorically unfounded."

But according to sources interviewed by the Jordan Times, the government did arrest hundreds of "religious police" in the capital after they marched to the palace of Prince Salman, governor of Riyadh, to protest being banned from the Al Shuleh shopping area. They were banned

by Prince Mishal, the owner of the centre, after "they simply got out of hand," said one Saudi businessman.

The government, increasingly embarrassed by Western complaints of harassment in the kingdom, which hosts nearly four million foreigners, moved to confiscate many trademark GMC trucks, which the religious police, known as mutawa, use to roam the streets in groups of five or six to enforce their brand of Islamic law.

According to several Saudi sources, prior to the march to Prince Salman's palace the demonstrators were warned that they would be arrested. There have been some unconfirmed reports that several protesters were killed when palace guards opened fire on the religious police.

According to one source, some of those arrested could be executed to send a clear message to dissidents in the kingdom. This could not be

confirmed by other sources.

"They simply were becoming too militant... they were on the rampage," said another Saudi businessman. "They went too far and the government cracked down on them."

The religious police, an anti-theism to Saudi Arabians seeking political and social liberalisation, had increased their militancy, especially in the downtown souks, shopping centres and schools, prior to their arrest.

Saudis and expatriates report harassment by the zealots to impose their brand of Islam, accusing women of prostitution because they wear perfume and aggressively harass veiled women.

"I was scared to leave my house because the mutawa would chase and sometimes threaten me," said a Saudi woman, who wears a veil, abaya and a face cover when she leaves her home. "They even harassed my 10-year-old daughter, who was totally co-

vered, because her wrist was showing... this is not Islam."

Many expatriates in Riyadh say the situation has improved after the arrest but they still fear having too many cars parked outside their homes, an indication that their is a party inside and possibly an invitation for the mutawa to place them under surveillance or try to enter.

After the Gulf war, King Fahd moved to assuage the zealots by providing them with extra funding. Many rejected the presence of foreign troops on Saudi soil, the site of Islam's holiest shrines, but overall remained silent.

Other indications of the newly acquired boldness of dissidents were signed petitions challenging government policy. One petition, addressed to the head of the religious establishment in the kingdom, Sheikh Abdul Aziz Ibn Baz, challenges Saudi participation in the Middle East peace conference in Madrid last year as

contrary to Islamic obligation to fight the Jews and regain control of Islam's holy places.

The petition, signed by theologians, judges and religious teachers, said the peace talks were tantamount to capitulation and that no truce was permissible with Islam's enemies, such as Israel.

It said those preparing to sign peace with Israel did not belong to Islam, citing in particular the rulers of Syria, many of whom belong to the unorthodox Alawite sect.

Another petition called on the ruling family to reform the system, criticising state corruption, and to enforce Islamic teaching more strictly.

The petition signed by hundreds of Muslim ulama, judges, university professors and preachers, criticised corruption in the political and economic system and called on King Fahd to implement a series of reforms, including set-

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Libyan judge denies report on Lockerbie suspects

TUNIS (Agencies) — The Libyan judge investigating Western charges against two men indicted for the 1988 bombing of Pan Am flight 103 denied on Tuesday that they have disappeared or were dead, and said they were safe.

"That is not true. Those who say that could come to Libya and I will allow them to see the two men," Libyan judge Ahmad Al Zawi told Reuters by telephone from Libya.

The Washington Post, quoting intelligence sources, on Tuesday said the men, Abdul Baset Ali Mohammad Al Meghrabi and Al Amin Khalifa Fhimah, were dead.

The paper said that Libya had been planning to announce the disappearance of the pair to suggest they had been kidnapped. "I can tell you that this is not true. The two men came to the (Tripoli's) supreme court two days ago to be interrogated again by my aides," the Libyan judge

said.

The United States and Britain have demanded that Libya agree to allow their extradition, but without success. A total of 270 people died when the Pan Am airliner blew up over Lockerbie.

U.S. Vice-President Dan Quayle said Washington was serious about forcing Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi to hand over the two Libyans.

"Qadhafi had better realise we are serious... you just have to look to the past to see that we have the political will to make these kinds of requests happen," Mr. Quayle said on British Broadcasting Corp. television on Monday night.

But asked if the United States might attempt to bomb the Libyan leader again, Mr. Quayle replied: "I am not saying what we will do, I am just saying we are serious and that he'd better understand we are serious."

Rescuers claw bodies from isolated mountain village

BEIRUT, Lebanon (AP) — Rescuers abandoned their immobilised bulldozers and clawed through eight metres of snow with spades and hands Tuesday to dig out the bodies of nine people killed by avalanches a week earlier.

More snow was expected to fall in Lebanon and neighbouring countries, which faced their worst winter in more than 40 years. Many schools remained closed in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan.

A thick layer of frost forced Lebanese civil defence workers to leave behind their bulldozers, which were skidding off roads onto snow-covered banks.

Rescuers backed by 30 Lebanese troops reached the village of Hizziya in the Bekaa Valley on foot and dug out nine bodies from snow-covered houses, the Civil Defence Department said in a statement.

The nine, found frozen to death in their homes, were among 14 people who have been reported dead for more than a week after the village was buried by several avalanches.

Officials said blizzards have killed 23 people in Lebanon since Feb. 1, and the independent newspaper An Nahar that "more victims will fall if the blizzards continue, given the primitive methods and equipment used in rescue operations."

The government said it sent medicine and heating fuel to the eastern Bekaa Valley using a roundabout route because the main road to Damascus was blocked by thick snowdrifts.

A Health Ministry statement

said the convoy, carrying 30 large boxes of medicine and other supplies, left Beirut for the Bekaa via Hums in northern Syria for the 300 kilometre drive.

In Syria, rescuers using bulldozers were trying to reach villages isolated for more than a week. Water pipes burst in Damascus as temperatures dropped well below freezing.

The traffic department reported 137 traffic accidents in the capital in the previous two days, with 24 people injured. Snow capped mosque domes and caked church steeples.

In Israel, farmers estimated crop damage from the snowstorms and rain that swept across the country this week would reach \$210 million, Israel radio reported.

Vegetable crops were extensively damaged along the Jordan Valley, where rising water spilled out over the banks of the Jordan River and flooded agricultural settlements.

The Sea of Galilee, Israel's main water reservoir, rose 13 centimetres Monday night even though the lake's exit dam has been completely opened.

As a result, water was flowing down the Jordan River into the Dead Sea for the first time in four years. But even with this winter's heavy precipitation, it was unlikely that the parched, sterile Dead Sea would be fully refilled.

In Jordan, the latest blizzard dumped as much as 2.5 metres of snow on parts of the Kingdom. The capital Amman received more than 60 centimetres in the



Rising water levels in the Jordan River caused water to flow into the Dead Sea for the first time in four years.

past two days. Officials said 133 people were

treated for broken bones or bruises as a result of icy conditions in the northern city of Zarqa alone.

Setback for hardliners in Iran's run-up to polls

NICOSIA (R) — Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has ruled in a row over election laws against hardline opponents of President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani.

Interior Minister Abdullah Nori said on Monday Khamenei had told him in a recent meeting that the 12-man Guardian Council should fully supervise parliamentary elections set for Apr. 10, the Iranian news agency IRNA reported.

Hardliners, fearful that the council might use its powers against them, had tried for months to limit its authority through amendments to election laws.

The 270-seat parliament or Majlis is the last stronghold of hardliners who have seen their power steadily eroded since the death of supreme Leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in 1989. Majlis Speaker Mehdi Karrubi said in December the hardline

combatant clergy faction he heads might consider not taking part in the election if the council acted with bias.

"Based on the guidelines offered by the leader, everything in relation with the election procedures ... has been fully settled," IRNA quoted Nouri as saying.

The ruling means that the council — six Muslim clerics and six lawyers whose main job is vetting Majlis decisions — has the right to disqualify candidates or cancel votes in any constituency.

Khamenei, who backs Rafsanjani's loosening of state controls on the economy and moderate diplomacy, has urged all officials to try to hold a fair election free from factional fighting.

But a bitter contest has already started with speeches in mosques and universities and press interviews although candidates will not sign up before March 11. Officially the campaign will be just for a week from April 2.

Moderates say Rafsanjani's policies are the only hope for Iran's war-bit economy and Majlis should support him.

"Who will we vote for? For a Majlis at the service of the country's progress or, God forbid, for one which keeps throwing spanners in the government's works?" Alinaqi Khamoushi, head of Iran's Chamber of Commerce, Industries and Mines, said in a speech last month.

The law requires Rafsanjani to put his ministers to a vote of confidence before the new Majlis, which meets on May 28.

Hardliners say their opponents are plotting a purge.

"Some people feel they have a religious duty to run down their rivals by calumny but we must be alert and frustrate the enemy's plots," Deputy Majlis Speaker Assadollah Bayat, also a hardliner, said in a mosque speech last month.

Gulf war backlash sparked anti-semitic bias in Canada

OTTAWA (AP) — Harassment and vandalism aimed at Jews rose last year to its highest level in a decade due to backlash from the Gulf war, B'nai B'rith Canada officials said Monday.

"The Gulf war provided an emotional stimulus for those already predisposed to anti-semitism to join forces with Saddam Hussein and attack Jews while Jews were landing in Tel Aviv," said Stephen Scheinberg, national chairman of the B'nai B'rith League for Human Rights.

He said more than 60 anti-semitic incidents occurred in the three weeks following the outbreak of the war in January 1991.

The group also said volatile social, political and economic conditions in Canada and abroad served as catalysts for an increase in racist activity.

Its annual audit of anti-semitic incidents in Canada found 251 reported cases of harassment and vandalism last year, 19 per cent more than 1990 and a 42 per cent rise over 1989.

Harassment includes any incident of abuse for threat against an individual, group or institution including hate propaganda. Vandalism involves physical damage to property.

Iran, Armenia to resume ties

NICOSIA, Cyprus (AP) — Iran and Armenia agreed to establish diplomatic ties Monday, the Islamic Republic News Agency reported.

An Iranian foreign ministry statement said the two countries would open embassies within a month.

Armenia's foreign minister, Raffi Hovannisian, currently in Tehran at the head of a high-ranking delegation, met with his Iranian counterpart late Sunday.

Hovannisian called on Iran to mediate a dispute between Christian Armenia and its Muslim neighbour, Azerbaijan, IRNA reported.

It quoted Mr. Velayati as saying that Iran would "fulfill her responsibility in ending the conflict between the two neighbours, Armenia and Azerbaijan."

ADDIS ABABA (R) — Some 2,000 Rastafarians want to attend a reburial of Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie, who died mysteriously after the Marxist revolution that toppled him 18 years ago, royalists said on Monday.

The place where Haile Selassie was buried has never been officially disclosed.

But Daniel Mengistu, a former general who heads the Ethiopian monarchist group Mo Anbassa, told Reuters the emperor's remains had been located in a secret spot.

Daniel said a Rastafarian group from the United States had arrived in the capital Addis Ababa to ask the government if they could attend the reburial set for July 23.

He said the Rastafarians — Christians who believe Haile Selassie was the son of God — want to hold a carnival of reggae music in the capital's main Makkal Square to mark the ceremony.

The two signed a letter of understanding to promote political, economic and cultural cooperation, IRNA reported in an earlier dispatch.

The agreement also calls for exports of Iranian natural gas to Armenia, plus other cooperation in oil and power-related projects, IRNA said.

Other agreements also signed in Tehran call for cooperation in transportation and production of non-ferrous metals, IRNA reported.

The historical dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan is over Nagorno-Karabakh, a mostly Armenian-populated enclave entirely inside Azerbaijan.

It is claimed by both countries and a 4-year-old battle for control has been one of the bloodiest in the former Soviet Union, resulting in hundreds of deaths.

Rastafarians ask to attend Ethiopian emperor's reburial

Salman Rushdie's death sentence remembered

LONDON (R) — Supporters of British Author Salman Rushdie plan read-ins, speeches and rallies worldwide to mark his third anniversary under an Islamic death sentence next Friday.

Organisers said on Monday they would call on Iran to rescind a ruling by its late spiritual leader, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, that Rushdie must die for blaspheming Islam in his novel "The Satanic Verses."

Indian-born Rushdie, 44, in hiding under police guard since Feb. 14, 1989, when Khomeini ordered his death, may also hear of an accord to bring out the first English paperback edition of his controversial book.

A U.S. consortium of publishers was reported earlier this month to be considering publication of an English paperback edition in America and then in Europe, despite Muslim anger.

The New York-based authors' guild is expected to make a formal announcement on Friday.

Carmel Bedford, spokeswoman for the International Committee for the Defence of Salman Rushdie, said thousands of writers, artists and others would join events on Friday in nations that include Britain, the United

States, Australia, France and Canada. But Rushdie is not expected to attend any of them.

"At last it is gathering momentum, I think people see that with the release of most of the hostages (held by pro-Iranian groups in Lebanon), they cannot understand what is keeping politicians quiet and why they have not moved on this fatwa (Islamic ruling), said Bedford.

Rushdie told an audience of publishers, broadcasters and journalists in December: "The Satanic Verses must be freely available and easily affordable, if only because if it is not read and studied, then these years will have no meaning."

But the U.K. action committee on Islamic affairs called for a continued worldwide campaign against "the notorious, filthy and profane book."

British shops of Penguin books, publishers of the hardback edition, were bombed after its publication in 1989 and talk of a paperback has fanned smouldering anger among British Muslims.

Penguin handed back the English-language paperback rights to the author at his own



Salman Rushdie

request in January.

A spokesman said the firm would consider whether to join the U.S. consortium when it got details of the new paperback plan.

Iran exports goods, not fundamentalism, to Turkmenistan

By Geneive Abdo
Reuters

ASHKHBAD, Turkmenistan — The green marble dome of the Agha Mosque glimmers even when fog and dust blur the outline of nearly every other building in this desert town.

Built by Ashkhabad's Muslims, the mosque is a symbol of Turkmenistan's re-entry into the Islamic World after decades of isolation.

"It has been a century-long dream of Turkmenistan to have a religion," says Mufi Khalilulla Gudazhiyev, before rushing off to evening prayers. "There are no obstacles to our religion now. We thought this day would never come."

Liberated from five decades of official atheism under Soviet rule,

Turkmenistan's orthodox Communist government passed a law in 1990 permitting freedom of religion.

Six mosques, all smaller than the Agha, have opened along Ashkhabad's dilapidated, muddy streets.

Men who once prayed secretly in their homes, gather at the mosques each night. In the afternoons, children attend Arabic lessons at new medreses, or Islamic institutes, after completing regular classes in state schools.

But the revival of a religion forced underground in the 1930s by Soviet leader Josef Stalin has not given this land of Sunni Muslims any grand illusions.

While the west ponders over whether the collapse of the Soviet Union will spur an explosion of

Iranian-style, Islamic fundamentalism among some 60 million people in the Muslim republics — Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan — Turkmenistan's Muslims remain under the tight control of President Saparmurat Niyazov's government.

Some western analysts say Turkmenistan is most open to Iranian influence — even though most Iranians are Shiite Muslims while Turkmen belong to the rival Sunni sect — because it shares a border with Iran.

"Many people here don't even know what fundamentalism is," says Gudazhiyev, stroking his long mediaeval beard. Nor are they the least bit interested in fomenting a revolution that would replace Turkmenistan's president with a mufi.

"We have no plans to create an Islamic state. Even if a religious leader were allowed to run the republic, no one is prepared to do this. It would take half a century for a religious leader to become qualified to run the state."

Turkmenistan's atheist government is perhaps the most conservative among republics in the former Soviet Union.

Television and radio remain under strict state control, and an aggressive security force, known to trail foreign visitors, keeps close tabs on its 2.5 million citizens.

The decision in favour of religious tolerance had little to do with civil liberties it was motivated by a need to placate Islamic countries inclined to develop trade relations with Turkmenistan.

With the United States preoccupied with Russia and Ukraine, Turkmenistan and other Muslim republics have turned east to look for investments.

"We can't sit and wait for the West to wake up and decide we are worthy of their investments," Valery Otechetsov, Turkmenistan's trade minister, says in a hostile tone.

"We need new markets, and we can't get a penny from Europe. Our economic situation forces us to look to countries that are interested in our economy."

Turkmenistan has turned to Iran, its neighbour 25 kilometres to the south of Ashkhabad, for economic salvation.

Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati has made an official visit to Ashkhabad. Turkmen President Niyazov led a delega-

tion to Tehran in October.

The flurry of diplomatic activity has already produced results. Two weeks ago, border posts were opened in the towns of Gidriolun and Gaudan along the divide between the countries.

Turkmenistan was part of Persia before the territory was absorbed into the Russian empire in the 19th century.

When thousands of Iranians and Turkmen travelled to the border, they greeted relatives they had heard about but never seen.

"Opening the border posts was just a first step," says Ata Chariev, Turkmenistan's minister for foreign investment.

"For trade with Iran, it is necessary to open highways, the sea, cable and telephone communications ...," says Chariev.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 77111-19

PROGRAMME TWO
18:00 Le Monde est a Vous
19:00 News in French
19:15 Intertroupe
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Tech
21:00 Clinical And Manant
22:00 News in English
22:20 Prime Support

PRAYER TIMES

05:01 Fajr
06:19 Sunrise
11:59 Dhuhr
14:53 Asr
17:20 Maghreb
18:39 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swellish, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 637783
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Teranisa Church Tel. 623566

Church of the Annunciation Tel.

623541

Anglican Church Tel. 625383, Tel. 628543

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751

Armenian International Church Tel. 683526

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811235

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 823824, 654932

Church of the Nazareth Tel. 675691

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

The country is currently affected by a west and relatively warm air mass, and a gradual rise in temperature is expected. Therefore the sky will be partly cloudy with chances for scattered rain. Winds will be westerly moderate.

Amman Min./Max. temp. 17/7

Aqaba 2/8

Deserts 2/15

Jordan Valley 7/17

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Bassim Qaddoumi 646024
Dr. Abdul Majed Shari 791405
Dr. Ahmad Suleih 732118
Dr. Abdul Aziz Taboun 783708
First pharmacy 661912
Ferdous pharmacy 778336
Al Asena pharmacy 637055
Nairook pharmacy 626972
Al Salam pharmacy 636720
Yaacub pharmacy 644945
Shmeican pharmacy 637660

IRBID:
Dr. Ahmad Abu Baker (—)
Al Shara'a pharmacy (278625)

ZARQA:
Dr. Hisham Hiyasat (—)
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate 630441
Rescue 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 63031
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Amman Municipality 787111
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 621
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Abdali Telephone Repair 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100

HOSPITALS

Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power 636381
Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 06-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 06-53200

IRBID:
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)98732
Al Fikra Modern Hospital (09)98990
IRBID:
Princess Banna Hospital (02)25555
Geek Catholic Hospital (02)22225
The Al Nafes Hospital (02)34710
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)31411

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn 642814
Akleb Maternity, J. Amn 642412
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Madina, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeican 6641714
Shmeican Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Musaber Hospital 6672719
The Islamic Abdali 66612757
Al-Ahli, Abdali 6641646
Italian, Al-Mubajreen 7771013
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 7751126
Army, Marfa 8916115
Queen Alia Hospital 02224050
Amal Hospital 674155
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)908500

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) Information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (06)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

09:00 Damascus (RJ)
09:00 Jeddah (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

09:30 Doha (RJ)
09:30 Lahore (RJ)
09:30 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:00 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
10:00 Istanbul (RJ)
10:00 Madrid, Rome (RJ)
10:00 Paris, Geneva (RJ)
10:15 London, Brussels (RJ)
10:15 Vienna, Frankfurt (RJ)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

11:00 Istanbul (RJ)
11:00 Tunis, Comblance (RJ)
11:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
11:45 London (RJ)
19:15 Aqaba (RJ)
19:30 Cairo (MS)
19:30 Chisro (RJ)
20:30 Benghazi (LN)
20:30 Karachi (PK)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

09:30 Doha (RJ)
09:30 Lahore (RJ)
09:30 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:00 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
10:00 Istanbul (RJ)
10:00 Madrid, Rome (RJ)
10:00 Paris, Geneva (RJ)
10:15 London, Brussels (RJ)
10:15 Vienna, Frankfurt (RJ)

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in file per 100

Apple (red) 700 / 700
Apple (yellow) 500 / 500
Banana (Mekammar) 500 / 450
Banana (Mekammar) 500 / 350
Beans 500 / 300
Cabbage 700 / 600
Carrot 100 / 120
Cauliflower 200 / 150
Cucumbers (large) 300 / 250
Cucumbers (small) 540 / 200
Garlic 250 / 200
Grapefruit 180 / 120
Lemon 180 / 120
Marrow (large) 300 / 250
Marrow (small) 300 / 200
Onion (dry) 300 / 400
Onion (green) 220 / 170
Orange 420 / 230
Pepper (hot) 1000 / 800
Pepper (sweet) 480 / 420
Potato 300 / 250
Radish 140 / 90
Sage 600 / 500
Spinach 200 / 150
Tomato 280 / 220

Ministry adopts plan to boost agricultural, poultry production

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Agriculture has adopted a plan for 1992 designed to boost agricultural production, including vegetables, fruits and cereals, and to boost poultry production and table eggs.

According to ministry officials, the plan entails increasing arable land grown with crops and a diversification of the types of crops produced in Jordan with a view to ensuring food security for the country.

Agriculture Minister Fayez Khasawneh said that the ministry plans to carry out projects through 13 major agricultural schemes during 1992.

The ministry's plan, he said, includes boosting the role of modern technology and research as well as increasing production of fruit tree saplings at the ministry's various nurseries. He said these nurseries would produce at least 890,000 fruit tree saplings during the current year.

The ministry's plans entail the production of no less than 207 tonnes of wheat, 126 tonnes of barley, 26 tonnes of lentils and 18 tonnes of chick peas in the form of seeds which

will be distributed to the farmers, the minister noted.

Referring to livestock, he said that the government will carry on with plans to improve new strains of sheep at its own farms. He said the government plans to distribute the sheep to livestock breeders at cost price to encourage them to increase their efforts in sheep fattening projects.

Going hand in hand with the sheep fattening programme, the minister said, the ministry plans to double its production of veterinary vaccines this year and it will conduct studies designed to provide full protection of animals.

Dr. Khasawneh noted that the ministry has adopted three plans for developing lands, the first being within the Zarqa River Basin where 32,000 dunums are involved in the project. The second project is for the development of the Hammam Basin in the eastern semi-desert regions around Rweished, where a pasture of 1.8 million dunum plot of land is involved. He said 600,000 dunums will be planted with cereals while 30,000 other



The Jordan Valley, which usually supplies the Kingdom with most of its vegetables and fruits, has been hardly hit by the recent storms. (File photo)

dunums of high lands will be reclaimed in the third plan.

In reference to range and afforestation projects, the minister noted that there are plans for greening 18,500 dunums of semi arid land. The ministry's nurseries will pro-

duce seven million tree saplings to be planted in these areas, the minister added. Also in the ministry's plans are programmes for the preservation of soil, creating pasture lands and providing protection to forests against fires.

Most northern, central Jordan Valley produce destroyed, officials say

By Elia Nasrallah
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The late snowstorms, frost and floods will make Jordanians dependent for their vegetables and fruit on the southern Jordan Valley regions, at least for the foreseeable future, according to observers and Agriculture Ministry officials.

Northern and central Jordan Valley farmers contacted by the Jordan Times drew a gloomy picture of the situation, noting that nearly 100 per cent of the vegetables and fruits grown in their farmlands have been washed away or inundated by the floods with no hope of saving any part of the harvest.

According to Ministry of Agriculture Secretary General Ghaleb Abu Arabi, the southern Jordan Valley, extending south of the Dead Sea, has not been affected by the severe weather conditions of the past two months and will continue to supply the market with vegetables and fruits.

Mr. Abu Arabi told the Jordan Times that most areas hit

were those of the northern Jordan Valley region. He said, 2,800 dunums grown with bananas and 4,200 dunums grown with vegetables like eggplants, pepper, tomatoes, potatoes and string beans were 100 per cent lost. Most of the damage to the crops in the northern Jordan Valley occurred due to the floods which inundated vast areas of land, said Mr. Abu Arabi. He said that the bursting of dams in the occupied territories and Syria has exacerbated the situation, causing more floods with larger areas of land covered by water.

In the central Jordan Valley region around Deir Alla, the farmlands were mostly affected by the frost before the floods came, according to Mr. Abu Arabi. He said that tomatoes, eggplants and other vegetables in this area sustained heavy damage ranging between 30 and 100 per cent.

Mr. Abu Arabi said that the frost which occurred late last month and the high winds caused more damages, especially to the vegetables grown under the plastic sheets. He said that the plastic sheets with their supporting beams and the plants underneath were either washed away or completely covered by water.

Referring to the Jordan Valley areas around south Shuneh, Mr. Abu Arabi said that an average of 60 per cent of the vegetables were damaged.

He said 8,000 dunums of eggplants, 2,000 dunums of marrow or squash and 300 dunums of potatoes were completely lost. Mr. Abu Arabi said that 60 per cent of the 10,000 dunums of bananas were lost, along with 40 per cent of the string beans and 60 per cent of the tomatoes in the south Shuneh area.

Mr. Abu Arabi said that the Ghor Safi region in the southern regions of the Dead Sea escaped unharmed and will continue to supply the markets with vegetables.

Referring to the highlands, Mr. Abu Arabi said that there were also losses there and the ministry has set up committees which are now touring various areas to make estimates of damage. Fences in the highlands sustaining damage will be re-built by the ministry and Jordan Valley farmers will be issued soft loans at 2 per cent interest to help them resume their activities.

He said poultry farms and others sustaining losses were also included in the government plans but at present there can be no estimate of the losses, especially as the River Jordan has flooded, reaching between one half of a kilometre to two kilometres in breadth and inundating the lands along the East Bank.

Minister of Agriculture Fayez Khasawneh told the Jordan Times earlier this month that the damages were estimated between 50 and 90 per cent. He said that the government has set up a ministerial committee to make estimates of the extent of damage to farmlands.

Arab Historians Union call for solidarity, unity

AMMAN (Petra) — Secretary General of the Arab Historians Union (AHU) Mustafa Al Najjar arrived in Amman Tuesday en route to Baghdad after taking part in the AHU's General Assembly meetings held recently in Adu.

In an arrival statement, Dr. Najjar said Arab historians stressed the unity of Arab historians and decided to keep the union's headquarters in Baghdad. The General Assembly praised the positive stands demonstrated by some Arab countries during the difficult and delicate circumstances which the union has been through.

Dr. Najjar pointed out that the General Assembly approved the expansion of the union's organizational structure to allow for the appointment of new assistants to the secretary general.

The assembly elected Sayyed Abdul Aziz Salem from Egypt as first assistant to the secretary general, and Mohammad Masha-

dani from Iraq and Abdul Karim Karim from Yemen as second and third assistants, respectively. The assembly called for lifting the sanctions imposed on Iraq since its takeover of Kuwait on Aug. 2, 1990, and decided to keep the union's headquarters in Baghdad.

It also condemned the attempts to traffic antiquities, manuscripts and items of cultural and historical importance outside the Arab countries and stressed the need for restoring the ones already stolen.

The assembly approved a recommendation to start classes in the union's Institute for Higher Studies in Arab History. However, it noted that the institute will award higher diplomas and master's degree only during the first stage.

Taking part in the General Assembly's meetings were representatives of Jordan, Sudan, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Yemen, Iraq and Algeria.

Home News in Brief

King congratulates Iran

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein Tuesday sent a cable to Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani congratulating him on his country's national day. The King wished President Rafsanjani continued good health and happiness and the Iranian people further progress and prosperity.

Princess to open exhibition today

AMMAN (Petra) — Her Royal Highness Princess Wijdan Ali today opens an art exhibition by Spanish artist Suad Al Ashiri. The event, which will be held at the Spanish Cultural Centre, includes 35 art plates.

Surprise! House session delayed again

AMMAN (Petra) — Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Abdul Latif Arabiyat has postponed the House's session scheduled for today until Sunday evening. The House's session was supposed to be held last Sunday, but was postponed due to the current weather conditions prevailing in the country.

Minister returns from Tokyo

AMMAN (Petra) — Industry and Trade Minister Abdullah Ensour Tuesday returned home after a week long visit to Tokyo during which he held talks with Japanese officials on commercial exchange and other economic issues.

Official to join Olympic committee

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordanian Olympic Committee will take part in the Asian Olympic Council's Statistics and Information Committee meetings which will be held in Tehran on Feb. 23. The two-day meetings will discuss means of enhancing cooperation and coordination among the national Olympic Committees in the fields of statistics and exchange of information. Representing Jordan in this two-day event will be Jordan's Olympic Committee Secretary General Abdullah Abu Nurwar.

Bank deposits increase

AMMAN (Petra) — Deposits with commercial banks during November 1991 increased to JD 1,477,819,000, compared with JD 1,410,319,000 during the same month during 1990, thus registering an increase of JD 67.5 million.

Football match rescheduled

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordan Football Association has decided to postpone a football match between Al Wihdat and Al Ramtha scheduled for last Tuesday until Friday due to the weather conditions prevailing in the country.

Rain, snow ease Jordan drought

AMMAN (R) — Torrential rain and blizzards have eased Jordan's three-year-old drought, filling reservoirs to bursting point and replenishing underground supplies.

"For this year, we have a surplus in water for our agriculture needs," Jordan Valley Water Authority Chief Abdul Aziz Weshah

said Tuesday.

The Kingdom's dams were at full capacity of 110 million cubic metres of water, he said, adding that proper management of expected further rainfall would provide enough water for an additional year.

Jordan has been hit by severe water shortages since 1989. The

drought cut farm production by 30 per cent last year.

Rain and snow during the Middle East's harshest winters for years have also flooded the Jordan River for the first time since 1952.

In another spin-off for the Kingdom, a dam in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights burst last

week, sending water cascading into the river leaving to the Dead Sea.

Water levels in the saline lake shared by Jordan and Israel have been falling by about 80 cm (31 inches) a year. They have risen by 61 cm (24 inches) in the past two months. Mr. Weshah said.

Doctors use medicine as common ground to help and understand people

By Serene Halasa
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Finding common ground for people to work in at this age and time seems to be a very highly improbable thing to do, but for one doctor the solution was the platform of medicine, a universal language he regarded as the answer and the link between cultures and nations alike.

Dr. Charles Horton, a founding member of Physicians for Peace, has strived since the establishment of his organisation to promote friendships and peace through medicine.

"We are using medicine not politics. We are all doctors and we have pledged to work on our fellow men and to take care of their illness and make them better," said Dr. Horton, who led a highly trained eight man team during a recent visit to Jordan.

Physicians for Peace, have conducted 22 missions since its establishment in 1985. Working strictly on a volunteer basis, highly qualified doctors and surgeons have so far operated on 3,500 patients in many areas around the world. Their missions have taken them to Egypt, Greece, Iraq, Jordan,

Panama, Syria, Turkey, the West Bank and Israel.

"We believe in the universal goodness of man," Dr. Horton said. "We also believe that there are good people in all countries and we should not only let ourselves hear of the bad things."

During his stay in Jordan, Dr. Horton was awarded a medal by His Majesty King Hussein in appreciation of his humanitarian work in alleviating the suffering of people around the world.

"It was a total surprise," Dr. Horton said of receiving the medal. "It is a great honour, and I hope to be a good ambassador of Jordan in the world."

In addition to providing medical care to the needy, the missions offer opportunities to form friendships between doctors around the world whose countries are politically antagonists, thus

promoting an atmosphere of cooperation and peace.

The Physicians for Peace mission to Jordan was hosted by the Noor Al Hussein Foundation in cooperation with the Royal Medical Services and the Jordanian Society of Plastic Surgeons.

During their ten-day stay in the Kingdom, eight highly qualified volunteer reconstructive surgeons performed 12 operations on needy patients. The operations, performed at King Hussein Medical City, ranged from reconstructive facial surgeries to hand surgeries.

The surgeons also visited medical schools in Jordanian universities and conducted joint scientific meetings with their Jordanian counterparts in which both sides exchanged medical and scientific information.

According to one team doctor, Dr. Kevin Smith, the meetings were held in a spirit of exchanging information and sharing opinions rather than teaching and learning.

"There was a collegial medical exchange with doctors here because the medical care in Jordan is extremely superb," Dr. Smith said.

Another form of promoting friendship and peace between doctors around the world is through a medical training fellowship programme offered for young physicians to train in the United States for 3-6-12 month intervals.

Members of the team left Amman on Tuesday for the United States and, according to Dr. Smith, some team members will return to the area — the West Bank — on April 4.

CDD has had busy year, report shows

AMMAN (Petra) — The Civil Defence Department has attended to 2,622 incidents since New Year's eve, according to the CDD's public relations director, Captain Nabil Kavar.

The figure included 85 fires, 1,475 first aid and 1,062 rescue cases. Capt. Kavar said that the incidents resulted in 1,496 different injuries and 27 deaths. The death toll included 7 people who were killed as a result of road accidents in Jordan; two from fire, one from the collapse of a house in Balqa and one from gas suffocation.

He added that three people died as a result of drowning in the Zarqa River stream. The death toll also included two people who caught fire while filling in kerosene stoves and 13 because of illness and old age.

Capt. Kavar noted that there was an increase in the number of incidents, attributing this to the weather conditions currently prevailing in the country. He called on citizens to abide by the public safety conditions and to adhere to the instructions issued by the authorities concerned in order to avoid such incidents.

Dog displays pyromaniacal tendencies

AMMAN (J.T.) — A villa located in Shmeisani caught fire when a kerosene stove was overturned as a result of a friendly play between a dog, belonging to the owners of the house, and the family's son, according to a report in Al Dussour Arabic daily. Soon after the stove overturned, fire engulfed the contents of the room. The fire scene resulted in large financial loss to the family and the injury of the dog.

WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Exhibition by Iraqi artist Salma Al Alaiq at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition of drawings by the French school's kindergarten children at the French Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition of oil and water colour paintings by Tetsu Wegelins, Lucy Mario, Hada Bitar and Jennifer Bowker at Alla Art Gallery.
- ★ Graphic art exhibition by Sadek Kwaish at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens Street.

THEATRE

- ★ Arabic play entitled "Who's There?" at the Royal Cultural Centre — 8 p.m.

CONDOLENCES

The editor and the staff of the Jordan Times would like to extend their deepest condolences for the passing away of Mrs. Haidouhi Darakjian, grandmother of Jordan Times reporter Aileen Bannayn, who died Saturday. May her soul rest in peace.



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Economic Forum

By Dr. Abdalla Malki

The shortcomings of the IMF programme

The set of objectives which a plan embraces is not a good or satisfactory gauge by which to measure its quality. What matters here is the bundle of ways and means employed to attain these objectives and how consistent these two groups are with each other. A plan or programme is essentially a set of goals but without the appropriate means the plan is, of course, no more than blueprint.

Probably with the exception of the International Monetary Fund itself, nobody or party claims that the IMF-sponsored economic adjustment programme for Jordan is a perfect document or is not improvable. Now, what are, accordingly, the shortcomings of this programme?

The basic defect in our adjustment programme is the open import policy it decrees. Jordan should not ban the importation of any goods nor impose quantitative restrictions on any imports. Additionally, tariff rates on any group of imports should not exceed a certain ceiling, purported to be 50 per cent (in the short term and probably lower beyond that). A full-fledged free import policy of this sort is self-defeating in a country whose economic dilemma beams out from its inability to repay its foreign debt. Trying to adjust the economy under a free import policy is very much like installing a boiler to heat a house whose door and windows are flung wide open. Foreign currencies needed to repay debt will not be saved for this purpose because they leak out

through the free import door as does heat.

The second shortcoming is the insistence of the IMF on the unbelated dismantling of price subsidies on some basic consumer goods. This creates popular resentment in a situation where public support is indispensable for the success of any economic reform. The IMF seems to be very adamant about this issue and is discarding its socioeconomic arithmetic. It is over-obsessed with the economic philosophical content of subsidies.

Another shortfall is the constraints put on the borrowing of the treasury from the public (Jordanians) as compared with its freedom to borrow externally on a net basis for almost the next 10 years. If money borrowed from the public is to be used for meeting part of the government's domestic obligation, namely and especially capital spending, there will be no point in prohibiting us to use our own money which will be, however, repaid sooner or later or even taxed away through actual taxation or through inflation. Through a proper approach, the Jordanian treasury may even borrow foreign currencies from Jordanians.

Another very serious pitfall is the absence of what seems to be a coherent scheme of investment and financing. It is one thing to "guesstimate" a certain volume of investments and adopt it as a plan target and it is quite another to get it to materialise. It is even another very different thing to control the import and export contents of these investments as to make them conform to the

external trade targets of the plan, which is indispensable to generating the surplus foreign exchange needed to start retiring your external debt. It is here that the question of ways and means becomes so dominant and absolutely decisive. This aspect of the IMF adjustment programme is very vague because, first, the contents of the programme have not, officially, been made public. Second, any projections that extend for more than five years are senseless from statistical and technical points of view. The adjustment programme envisages that Jordan will be able to its external debt (net) 10 years from now. Jordan will be able to do so only if all economic variables behave exactly as scheduled and over a 10 year period. Up until now, no econometrician or computer claim they can project, with any degree of reliability, the path of these variables over such a period. If that were possible, the Americans would not have failed in forecasting the present recession of the American economy, a process which covers only one year!

Nobody or party should oppose economic adjustment because reform is a national necessity. But there are different versions of adjustment. The best version is the one that maximises national benefits through goals attained. By insisting on free trade, the present IMF programme maximises costs. We have to wait until its full details are disclosed to see what it intends to do about maximising benefits and by which means.

Wisdom when it counts

THE DECLARATION of a state of emergency in Algeria is nothing short of a setback for the democratisation process in that country and for democratic hopes elsewhere in the Arab World. It is most unfortunate that conditions in that important Arab state had deteriorated to the extent that its leaders found it necessary to halt the democratic march. Without the desire to lecture anyone or to draw parallels when the circumstances may differ, Algeria and other Arab countries facing difficulties in reconciling pluralistic democracy with their peculiar situation, could have benefitted a great deal from the Jordanian experiment in democratisation. There is little doubt that through statesmanship and popular awareness Jordan has fortunately been able to steer its fledgling democracy through high waves till it reached the stability and progress that it now enjoys.

When the Islamists in Algeria, as mainly represented by the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), appeared to be on the brink of gaining parliamentary majority, much of the country panicked and decided to deal with this "danger" in a blunt way instead of trying to establish a modus operandi between it and the other political forces in the country. Former Algerian President Chadli Benjedid was of the opinion that coexistence with the Islamists could be secured provided there were ironclad assurances that the basic tenets of the Algerian Constitution remained intact. Granted it is easier said than done when it comes to providing for all times such basic constitutional safeguards against allowing the country to drift into chaos and tyranny, whether by the majority or the minority. The avenue proposed by the former Algerian leader appears, nevertheless, to be less problematic than the state of civil strife and instability that the country seems to have suffered in the wake of the suspension of national elections.

It is also the fault of FIS for sowing fear and anxiety in the minds of many Algerians to such an extent that panic broke loose in the country. By proposing to transform irreversibly the country according to their image and without any due concern for the other schools of thought, many Algerians, and rightly so, concluded that FIS does not seek to coexist with other political parties in the country, but rather is determined to cling to power for ever. This, many thought, would be achieved by uprooting pluralistic democracy once and for all. Had FIS given clear signals to all sides that it seeks to share power with other factions and exchange views with them, much of the chaos that ensued would have dissipated before exploding into an emergency rule.

Jordan has provided for a rather successful operational democracy where no party, no matter what and how it regards itself as having a monopoly on righteousness, should be allowed to turn into a tyrannical force that is capable of putting under its thumb all other constituencies.

Finally, it has to be said that the declared state of emergency is not the answer to the problems of Algeria. Maintaining a dialogue and a modus operandi with all factions in the country is the only viable way to resolve the impending conflict. But for this to happen, cool-headedness is required, not panic.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

FOREIGN MINISTER Kamel Abu Jaber is due to pay a visit to Damascus later this week in order to coordinate the Jordanian and Syrian positions with regard to the ongoing Middle East peace negotiations, and to counter Israel's stand vis-a-vis the settlement programme it is carrying out unlawfully in the occupied Arab lands, said Sawt Al Shaab daily. The paper said that coordination among the Arab parties at this stage is of paramount importance if the Arabs are to make a real headway in the negotiations and attain the aspired durable peace in the region. The paper said that the more adamant the Shamir government becomes the closer the Arabs should move, especially in the course of negotiations which have so far achieved nothing. The Shamir government is going ahead with its plans to build settlements on Arab land, is holding on to its intransigent stand and planting mines in the path of peace with the hope of driving the Arabs into desperation, said the paper. It said that the Shamir government had, from the very start of the negotiations, taken upon itself the task of aborting the peace process and is no doubt placing obstacles now, before the Feb. 24 date set for resuming the bilateral talks in Washington. The paper said that coordination of Arab positions before these talks is of paramount importance and Jordan is bent on doing just that in order to ensure the return of Arab rights and the restoration of usurped Arab territory.

AL DUSTOUR daily tackled the situation in Algeria in the wake of the recent events and the clashes between the government troops and the Islamic Salvation Front. The series of measures taken by the army-supported government of Algeria can by no means succeed in settling the political issue even if calm had been achieved in the country for the time being, said the daily. The situation in Algeria is very serious indeed, in view of the divisions among the political groups and the confrontation between the Salvation Front and the government; and should further disturbances occur, foreign forces are bound to interfere in the country's internal affairs — a process which would cost the country dearly, the paper said. It said that the Arabs are watching the regrettable incidents with deep sadness and are also looking with concern over the future of democracy in this Arab country. It said that all concerned parties should resort to reason and dialogue in order to avoid violence that would benefit no one at all. It said everything possible should be done to stop the looming civil war from breaking out and also to save the country from military dictatorship.

Palestinians eke out grim existence in Lebanon

By Samia Nakhouli
 Reuters

BEIRUT — They arrived in Lebanon with temporary tents 44 years ago and now live mainly on handouts in tumbledown concrete shacks. They and their descendants, part of a Palestinian refugee community numbering more than half a million, say their plight is steadily worsening.

Their dream of going home has also turned into a nightmare. "I lived on the hope of going back to Palestine, but now I know I will die here. I don't even think that my grandchildren will see it either," said 75-year-old Mohammad Ajneha, who ekes out his declining years in the Shatila refugee camp.

Shatila, a place of horror almost 10 years ago when Christian militiamen massacred hundreds of its inhabitants during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, is one of 12 refugee shanty towns dotted around the country.

Shatila is considered the worst. It is winter and a filthy cocktail of rainwater, sewage, rotting garbage and mud oozes along the narrow alleyways.

"Our life is disgusting. It's full of death... we live in a cage we can't come out of," said 14-year-old Jawaher Al Ali from the camp in suburban Beirut. His four brothers and mother were killed in the 1982 invasion and battles with militiamen.

Refugees voice despair, refusing to believe that efforts to settle the Arab-Israeli conflict could end their ordeal. "My life's goal is to get out of here but deep down I know I will be living here forever," Jawaher said. "I often feel so desperate, I sit and cry... I have hope in nothing."

Palestinians who fled to Lebanon in 1948 to escape the war that marked the birth of Israel arrived only with tents. They thought they would be going home in a few weeks.

Years passed and the refugees grew to 100,000. There are now 550,000 of them. About 300,000 live in the camps. The rest are semi-integrated and live in towns alongside the Lebanese.

Most of the Palestinians are casualties of war. They were caught up by 15 years of civil strife in Lebanon, including the Israeli invasion, massacres by a pro-Israeli Christian militiamen and three years of battles with the Muslim Amal fighters in which thousands were killed.

Syrian troops, part of a 40,000-strong force in the country, keep tight control of the Beirut camps, imposing dusk-to-dawn curfews, checking people for weapons, and banning books considered politically dangerous.

Most of the concrete hovels are so dark that residents light oil lamps and candles to see during the day.

Heaps of rubble from demolished houses and tatty wall posters of slain guerrillas and

civilians testify to the years of conflict.

Fayez Najjar, his wife and nine children huddle together for warmth on four mattresses in the middle of a dank room. Rain leaks into buckets set up around them.

Khaled Hachem, his wife and five children sleep, bath, cook, wash and hang their laundry in a four metre by four metre room. Clothes, shoes and dirty laundry compete for floor space with plates, pans, and food rations.

The Hachems, like the 2,000 other residents of Shatila — before the massacre there were 10,000 people here — have not had electricity for three years. There is no sanitation, water only occasionally.

"I have no choice but to live this life until God takes my soul," said Hachem who lost an eye and three of his children in the war. "I will go straight to the cemetery from here."

Dr. Hassan Saleh, head of Sha-

tila's Red Crescent clinic, said conditions caused an outbreak of typhoid in the camp late last year.

"Bronchitis, allergies, influenza, tuberculosis and skin diseases are common at the camps," Mr. Saleh said.

Officials say illiteracy is rising among the Palestinians, traditionally among the best-educated Arabs.

Ele Saaf, the Lebanon director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) which provides free education for about 69,000 Palestinian students, said only 16.5 per cent passed in last year's exams compared with 80 per cent at the start of the civil war in 1975.

Palestinian officials said educational, medical, and economic services had worsened. The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) — deprived of Arab money after siding with Iraq in the Gulf war — had cut aid to Lebanon refugees.

Only 38,000 of the refugees,

deemed extremely needy, receive monthly UNRWA rations of cash, food and blankets.

Relief officials put the unemployment rate among refugees at 65 per cent. Unemployment shot up after Gulf states expelled thousands of Palestinians to Jordan and Lebanon in 1991.

Zahira Abdul Fattah and her 11-year-old son — the result of her rape by Christian militiamen at Shatila in 1982 — were left with nothing two weeks ago. Their home burned down after a kerosene lamp fell to the ground.

Kheir Mohsen, a 42-year-old blind man, and his wife Fatima, who lost her leg in the Shatila massacres, live with their three children on charity and a 10-dollar PLO monthly grant.

"I wish the Europeans would send up an animal protection society," said Zahra Isa, a 50-year-old housewife. "Maybe they will have mercy on us and treat us like their animals."

Never mind the age, feel the quality

By Sue Palmer

PRIMARY teachers have become expert at doing things the hard way. As an example of long-term standing-in-a-hammock, there can be little to beat our devotion to a developmental model of education which exists within an organisational system completely at odds with it. As so often with our profession, I don't know whether this dedication amounts to saintliness or certifiable lunacy.

Primary schools are organised on a chronological basis. Children enter at five and move up the school once a year after the summer holidays. Teachers know this is nonsense. The only thing that five-year-old children have in common is their age; and the odds against any child maintaining a neat linear progression in physical, social, emotional and academic development throughout the seven years of primary school must be something like googolplex to one.

We have, therefore, despite the neat chronological system, attempted to teach children in a way consistent with their individual development. This is hard when there are 30-odd in a class, all developing at their own particular rates. In one top primary class I taught, there was one boy who had trouble writing any word of more than three letters and could not count beyond 20, while at the other end of the ability scale was a lad who was taking an Open University maths course in his spare time.

Now everyone is discovering yet again that there are problems with teaching in primary schools. But they miss the essential point: a chronological system and a developmental model do not mix.

There are calls for a return to streaming (by ability), but within the chronological framework, so that some children are labelled as eight-year-olds. As and others as eight-year-olds Bs, Cs and Ds; this is anathema to teachers who are concerned for their pupils' emotional as well as academic development. There are suggestions that bright children should move more rapidly through the system; a partial recognition that chronology does not work, but again singling out some children and leaving the others stuck on the age-group treadmill. There are suggestions that older children need a different sort of teaching from younger children: nobody seems to see that children at different stages need different teaching — it is not necessarily age-related.

When the national curriculum was published some years ago, many primary teachers paused in hammock-balancing to give a cry

of joy and relief. "It's a developmental model!" we yelled. The first five levels for the core curriculum subjects seems to sum up with remarkable succinctness what could be expected of most children as they moved through primary school. Maybe schools would now have the courage to move away from chronology.

But no, there was also mention of "key stages", which were age-linked, and the key stages were concerned with assessment, which was the thing that frightened everybody most. So children have remained chained firmly, for academic purposes, to their dates of birth.

But it would be so easy to reorganise things. To arrange the

pupils in a primary school in five broad bands according to their developmental levels. To arrange transfer between bands based on teachers' assessments and occasional standardised tests (which each pupil would take, like the driving test, when he or she was ready to take them) at the end of every term. Children would progress up the school in a much more fluid way; not as a class, each year in early September, but in dribs and drabs, when they were ready to move on.

It would be much easier to tailor teaching to pupils' needs. A teacher would need to cater for the developmental level in his or her band only, not, as at present, for a very wide range across a

chronologically-formed class. There would be opportunities to improve teachers' promotion prospects, too. In large schools most bands would require a team of teachers, one of whom would be senior teacher with overall responsibility for the band, but still working in the classroom. By Bands 4 and 5 it may be thought appropriate to arrange teaching resources differently, perhaps using subject specialists.

There would be some problems, of course. What about the pupil who should be in Band 3 for English but still at Band 2 level in some aspects of maths? Transfer would have to depend on an overall developmental level, and

extra provision made for such anomalies, but wouldn't it concentrate the mind wonderfully on those elements of each child's education that needed particular attention? And extra provision would, of course, be necessary for dyslexic pupils and children with other specific learning difficulties.

And what about the children, wouldn't they mind? Wouldn't those who moved more slowly through the system than the average be labelled failures? I believe such failure would be no more noticed than that of the child who is constantly bottom-group material among his chronological peers. When I taught in a small

country school where there weren't enough children to make chronological classes, I had to group my pupils largely by ability, not age. I was obviously not bothered about age differences so the pupils soon forgot them too.

Children are generally much happier when asked to do work at an appropriate level for them, and much more likely to succeed. Then, once they are succeeding at one particular level, they have a great incentive to move on to the next. We could avoid so much misery, heart-searching and mispent effort if we acknowledged that this does not only happen on Sept. 6 every year. — The Independent.



Teaching children of the same age but with widely varying abilities makes little sense for staff or pupils (file photo)

8 policemen killed in Algeria

(Continued from page 1)
since the military took power one month ago.

France dismayed

France expressed dismay on Tuesday at violence in Algeria and said only an end to confrontation could enable a return to democracy.

A foreign ministry statement made no mention of Algeria's declaration on Sunday of a 12-month state of emergency and appeared to condone implicitly a crackdown on the FIS.

"France cannot be indifferent to what is happening in Algeria. It expresses its consternation at the cycle of violence," spokesman Daniel Bernard told reporters.

"France hopes the Algerian people will find the means to overcome the trial they are undergoing and to put an end to confrontation. Algeria will only find the way to democracy on these conditions."

Several French leading newspapers were less coy, saying the country's new military-backed rulers appeared to be rejected by the population as a whole.

"The rejection of the new authorities now goes way beyond a hard core of FIS activists," said the leftwing Liberation.

"The Islamic mobilisation has

set fire to Algeria's social and demographic powder keg, drawing in numerous marginalised and desperate youth."

The right-wing El Figaro said it was "certain the fundamentalists had shrewdly taken advantage of increasing hardship and loss of hope among Algerians."

"What is really needed is an economic miracle. But an improvement in standards of living is certainly not for tomorrow or even conceivable in the medium term," Le Figaro said.

The respected daily Le Monde later denounced the Algerian rulers' move, saying the state of emergency was "a measure usually used by a dictatorship."

"The country is edging irresistibly closer to a state of rampant insurrection," the daily said. "Recent scenes of city riots have conjured up the Palestinian intifada and the army's response has brought back memories of the Algerian war."

"In these circumstances, what value is there in promises to retain the democratic process and give the people a say as soon as possible — promises which were vague enough to start off with?"

Le Monde said the move risked alienating moderate Algerians, relieved when the authorities prevented the fundamentalists from coming to power, and could well push disaffected Algerian youths into the arms of the FIS.

Less housing units than claimed

(Continued from page 1)

That statement was calculated to send shivers down the spines of Israeli leaders, who depend on U.S. aid to pay their foreign debts and keep the richly Israeli economy afloat.

The tide of 400,000 Soviet Jews in the past two years has created 11 per cent Israeli unemployment, a two-decade high.

But barbed wire is unlikely to give up his belief that the occupied territories must belong to Israel for security and national

istic reasons. Few believe he will stop the settlements, especially before a June 23 election.

In his interview, Mr. Baker said that Israel should stop settlements and repeated that Washington was no longer prepared to finance them, directly or indirectly.

"Settlements themselves are an obstacle to peace and we have since 1967 told the Israelis that it is the view of every administration, Republican and Democrat alike, that they should stop settlement activity," Mr. Baker said.

Warm air, occasional sun

(Continued from page 1)

reviewed at a cabinet meeting Monday evening.

The meeting by the ministerial committee entrusted with studying the consequences of the bad weather conditions, discussed means of dealing with the situation.

The meeting, chaired by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education Thouran Hindawi discussed the damages to the infrastructure including electricity and

road networks and the damage to the agricultural lands in the highlands and the Jordan Valley.

An initial plan has been drawn up by the committee to deal with the situation, according to Petra. Those attending the meeting were the ministers of finance, planning, water and irrigation, interior, energy and mineral resources, communications, public works and housing, supply, health and agriculture as well as minister of state for prime ministry affairs.

Egypt arrests 3rd Israeli 'spy'

CAIRO (R) — Egypt has arrested a third member of an Israeli Arab family on suspicion of spying for the Jewish state, security sources said on Tuesday.

Maged Fares Masrati, 25, was arrested on Monday while trying to cross the border from Egypt to Israel with a forged passport. The sources said he confessed to spying for the Israeli Mossad intelligence agency along with his father and sister.

Fares Subhi Masrati, 41, and his daughter Fayqa, 17, were arrested last week and are being

held in a maximum security prison. Diplomats said they believed they were the first Israelis to be detained by Egypt on suspicion of spying since the two states signed a peace treaty in 1979.

Security sources said the son had been taken to a maximum security prison in Cairo. No formal charges have been brought against the suspects.

Israeli diplomats say they have pressed Egypt to let them see evidence against the Masratits but have received no answer.

NATO could be in trouble over ties with U.S.

By Nicholas Doughty
Reuter

BRUSSELS — NATO could be heading for crisis now that the United States, its senior member, has broken a long-standing taboo by suggesting that success in world trade talks is linked to the future of the Western alliance.

U.S. policy-makers including Vice President Dan Quayle touched on the issue at a weekend defence conference in Munich, with some officials suggesting that failure in the GATT trade talks could encourage an American withdrawal from Europe.

Most analysts and NATO officials contacted by Reuters said the implied threat reflected domestic U.S. political worries in an election year, with President

George Bush coming under fire for not doing enough to solve economic problems at home.

But many said such rhetoric could strain trans-Atlantic ties which have been at the heart of NATO since it was founded in 1949 — links embodied by the U.S. troop presence in Europe.

Mr. Quayle, clearly attempting to repair any damage, said on Monday there was no link between GATT talks and the U.S. military presence in Europe.

But remarks by Mr. Quayle and other U.S. officials at the Munich seminar had already provoked a frosty response from one ally.

"It won't work for you to say, we have to agree on GATT or we'll leave NATO," said Dutch Foreign Minister Hans Van Den Broek.

The United States and some European allies are already at odds over how far the European Community should develop an independent defence role in the future. Analysts say comments linking trade to security issues will increase those tensions.

"This is souring the debate," said Martin McCusker, a defence specialist with the North Atlantic Assembly in Brussels. "It's just going to make it more difficult for everybody."

During the decades of the cold war, there was tacit agreement among North Atlantic Treaty Organisation members that solid trans-Atlantic ties were so important to fending off a Soviet-

backed threat that other problems like trade would not be allowed to interfere with security. "Now, the glue that held us all

together — the threat — has gone and there are no more restrictions," said one NATO official. "This kind of debate could be very damaging to the alliance, whether it's U.S. election year posturing or not."

NATO Secretary General Manfred Woerner, speaking at the Munich conference, acknowledged the link between trade and security and said that a major U.S.-European row over subsidies in the GATT talks would have to be resolved.

"If that question is not satisfactorily dealt with, we risk a profound crisis in the trans-Atlantic alliance," said Mr. Woerner.

The United States is already planning to reduce its forces in Europe to around 150,000 less than half the level just before the collapse of communism in East-

ern Europe. Washington, worried that voters want to see more savings to help an ailing domestic economy, recently ordered the pace of withdrawal to be increased.

Few officials in the 16-nation alliance or U.S. legislators believe the United States will keep anywhere near 150,000 troops in Europe, with many predicting that figure could be halved.

"For now, no one doubts that the U.S. administration wants to keep at least some troops in Europe," said one alliance diplomat. "But the mood of isolationism is growing in the U.S. and a war of words on trade would just make it worse."

What is more, analysts say, such attacks are not likely to win many points for Washington.

"During the cold war, the U.S. could have applied leverage in trade rows with this kind of threat and there's a fair chance that it might have won concessions," said Regina Cowen-Karp of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

"Not any more. The Europeans want the Americans to stay, but there is no longer a real, immediate threat to them. Trying to apply pressure in this way is not going to work."

Mr. McCusker of the North Atlantic Assembly agreed.

"They're shooting themselves in the foot by linking two issues that are not really related," he said. "Besides, it is at least as much in the interest of the Americans to stay in Europe as it is for the Europeans to have them here."

A computer which reads for blind people

By Pierre-Albert Lambert

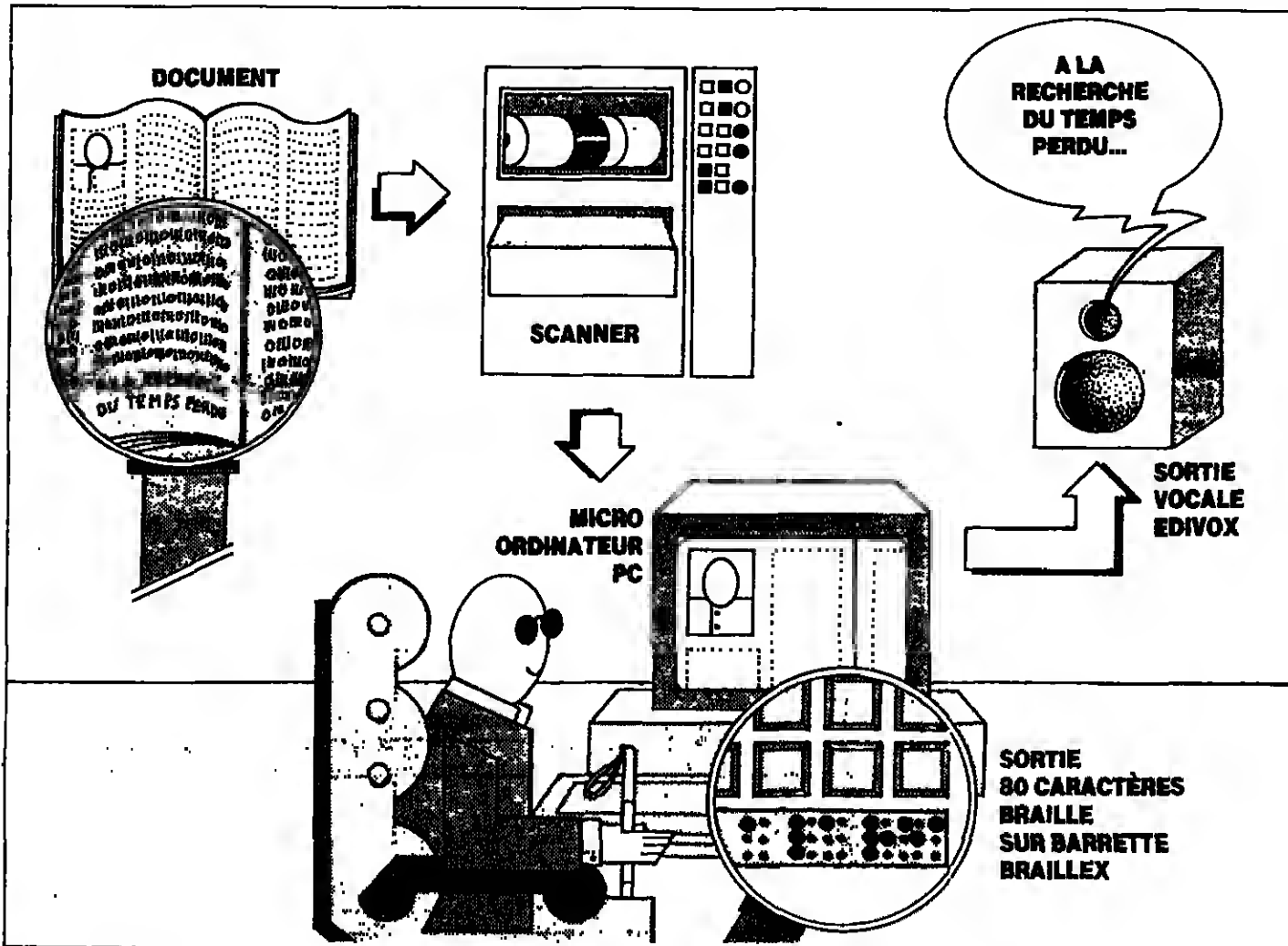
Blind people in Paris are now able to read the 150,000 works in the Cité des Sciences in Paris, thanks to a computer system which is unique in Europe and which immediately transforms the text of their choice into an artificial voice.

It started out as a challenge. How could a sightless person become a real reader in a library? Computer experts have solved the problem by creating the Louis Braille room at the Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie at La Villette in Paris.

Paul Héricart, 26, has been blind from birth. He is fascinated by mathematics and is one of the keenest readers in this library. "Together with basic works, I can find the best and most recent books published on the subject which interests me," he says. He spends two afternoons a week studying there.

As soon as the sightless person arrives at the media library, he has no problem finding his way. There is a special guided walkway in relief, guiding him to the Louis Braille room. Once there, he easily knows where to go, thanks to indications by sound, smell and touch. His hearing is attracted by the pleasant sound of a fountain. Then he is guided by the smells of a little garden planted with hyacinths or jasmine, depending on the season. With his fingers, he can feel the Oregon pine rail which has been chosen for its lasting scent and tells him he has reached his destination.

Paul Héricart installs himself in one of the four individual listening booths for sightless persons. While the book he has ordered is brought to him, he switches on the computer with a loudspeaker



Sketch of the computer used by blind people in the 'city of science' in Paris (Photo by E. Chino/Explorer)

on top. The book is placed on his left on the table and is read, a page at a time, by an image numeriser, a kind of scanner. The computer

immediately turns the written text into a spoken text. The synthetic voice coming from the loudspeaker is perfectly understandable as punctuation is taken

into account. It is enough to press a key to stop or start the reading. Ephemeral Braille. Rather than listening to the artificial voice, the user may pre-

fer to "read" the text he has chosen, in Braille. If so, he connects the loudspeaker and uses the "Braillex bar" in its place.

In front of the computer keyboard, there is a bar on which the blind person places his fingers. The bar has the same number of holes per character in it as there are dots in a Braille letter (six or eight). There are 80 characters to a line. For each character, little rods poke through the holes as required, to form the letters and the blind person can read them by feeling the bar. When he comes to the end of a line, he presses a key to have the following line. The line he has just read then disappears, hence the name "ephemeral Braille."

Since 1989, this system has been available for sightless persons at the Cité des Sciences. There are 60,000 sightless persons in France. It can be used free of charge but users have to book by phone. The Louis Braille room receives students, researchers and ordinary readers just like any library.

Pupils from Institutes for the Blind in Paris go and study there in small groups, waiting for the time when their establishments have such a system. The high cost of the equipment and the installation (2 million francs for four work units) explains why the system is not yet widespread.

The Louis Braille room was created thanks to close collaboration between a clever architect, Pierre-Louis Grosbois and the team of computer experts who designed the high performance system.

A young assistant at the Cité des Sciences, Joëlle Corvest, who is herself blind, played an essential part here. For years, she has devoted herself to finding means of overcoming the handicap of blindness, to facilitate access to culture for sightless persons. The Louis Braille room is largely her work — L'Actualité En France.

Saudis crack down on militants

(Continued from page 1)

ting up a shura council and reviewing state laws to ensure conformity with the Holy Koran and Islamic jurisprudence.

"In these difficult times in which we realised the need for change, we find it imperative to direct our energies towards reform," the petition said.

It pointed out that members

of the shura council "must be specialised individuals who are known for their honesty, loyalty and total independence, capable of resisting pressure that may influence the council's function." They want a council through which Saudis who are not members of the royal family could participate in governing.

The petition also called for "a review of existing political,

economic and administrative laws and regulations to abolish what contradicts Islamic sharia."

The long list of demands also includes "achieving a measure of justice and equality among members of the society, prosecuting high-ranking officials without exceptions for crimes such as corruption and mismanagement." It also urged a "fair distribution of public funds among citizens."

Although most of the signatories come from the religious and academic establishment, which is profoundly fun-

damentalist, some of their demands are usually associated with Saudi liberals.

One analyst said the "ulema remained silent and behaved during the war period and now they are asking to be rewarded for their cooperation. They want their share of power."

Western diplomats quoted by Reuters said that secret tapes by militant Saudi zealots fulminating against a wide range of topics from American weapons to liberated women to modern Arabic poetry are circulating privately throughout the Gulf region.

Sheikh Ibn Baz responded indirectly last month to the petitions by denouncing those who challenge the Islamic credentials of their political opponents, arguing that debate involving varying interpretations of Islam should be conducted on a more rational basis.

Although most analysts do not foresee a threat to the powerful regime, Sheikh Ibn Baz's response indicates that the authorities were taking seriously criticism by the zealots.

Some analysts claim the in-

creased militancy, which eventually led to the crackdown, was provoked by the government and was not only a legacy of the Gulf war but brought resentment of deeper Western influences and hopes of more representative government.

These analysts contend the government planted agents within the religious police network to carry out militant acts in order to give the government an excuse to crackdown on the mutawa, which were becoming more vocal in their criticism of the government's internal and external policies.

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JORDAN MARKET PLACE

WINTER OLYMPICS

Top four all fail in combined skiing event

VAL D'ISERE, France (Agencies) — The rutted downhill and slalom courses at La Face de Bellevard teamed up Tuesday to throw the big names out of the men's combined Alpine skiing event at the Winter Olympics.

Marc Girardelli, Guenther Mader, Paul Accola and defending champion Hubert Strolz skidded, slithered or tumbled on the snow.

That left Italy's Josef Polig to collect the gold, countryman Gianfranco Martin the silver and Switzerland's Steve Locher the bronze.

Luxembourg's Girardelli, arguably the best skier never to have won an Olympic medal, fell during Monday's downhill leg of the combined. So did Austria's Mader, who had won the bronze medal in Sunday's first Alpine event of the games, the downhill.

That meant there was no point in their turning up for Tuesday's slalom races.

Accola, winner of three World Cup combined events this season, was a hot favourite to win gold here and seemed poised to do it after Monday's downhill. Barely eight seconds into the first of the two slalom runs, the versatile Swiss was on the floor.

He plodded back to the gate he had just straddled and completed the course, eight seconds exactly behind the fastest man on the first slalom run, Austria's Strolz, and out of medal contention.

Heavyweight division in chaos after Tyson verdict

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Life after Tyson.

"That's what the world of boxing faces in the wake of former heavyweight champion Mike Tyson's conviction Monday night on a charge of rape and two charges of deviate sexual conduct."

"It means absolutely nothing to boxing," said Bob Arum, an arch-rival to promoter Don King, who is Tyson's promoter. "In some way it helps boxing because it eliminates someone who is perceived to be a bad apple in the mix."

That's not how Seth Abraham sees it.

Mr. Abraham is president of Time-Warner Sports, and Time-Warner is the parent company of HBO, which presents cable television boxing shows, and of TVKO, which presents pay-per-view boxing telecasts.

TVKO was set to telecast Evander Holyfield's defence against Tyson on Nov. 8, which was canceled when Tyson sustained a rib injury while training in October. That fight was expected to gross more than \$100 million.

"The most profound effect, obviously, is on the heavyweight championship, and that connects with the other divisions," Mr. Abraham said. "As the heavyweight division goes, so goes boxing."

The sport, however, mirrors the people who fight or make a living from boxing. It is a survivor.

Also, when the heavyweight division is in decline, smaller fighters come to the fore.

"Other divisions got attention when Muhammad Ali was out (from 1967 to 1970 because of his conviction for refusing induction

into military service," Mr. Abraham said.

It was smaller fighters who started the title loss of Jack Johnson in 1915 and the championship win of Jack Dempsey in 1919, from the retirement of Dempsey in 1928 until the rise of Joe Louis in 1936, and from the retirement of Louis in 1949 until the rise of Rocky Marciano in 1951.

"There's enough big fights," Mr. Arum said. "George Foreman-Holyfield (in a rematch) is big enough," Mr. Arum said. "There will be more big combinations in the years ahead."

There, however, will be no single attraction like Tyson, who is a major draw no matter the caliber of the opponent.

"He is a legitimate cash register," Mr. Abraham said.

Without Tyson, there is not a real leader in the heavyweight division, which badly lacks depth.

"It is open season without Tyson," said 42-year-old Larry Holmes, a former champion, who admittedly wants no more to do with Tyson, who knocked him out in 1988.

Holmes, however, would like a title shot against anybody else. And Holmes and the 43-year-old Foreman are attractive, especially against one another, to the nostalgia crowd.

Then there are prospects such as Riddick Bowe and Lennox Lewis, whose popularity as yet does not reach beyond boxing fans.

Holyfield is an unbeaten champion, but in his fights against Buster Douglas and Foreman, it was the opponent who was the major attraction. It would have the same story if he had fought Tyson.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
& TAMMAM HIRSH
1991, The New York Times Co.

DON'T PLAY REFLEXIVELY

North-South vulnerable North deals.

NORTH
♠ 9 7
♥ J 3
♦ A K 10 6
♣ K J 5 4

WEST
♠ A Q 2
♥ 9 7 6 5 4
♦ 7 5 2
♣ Q 3

EAST
♠ 4
♥ Q 10
♦ J 9 8
♣ A 10 9 8 7 6

SOUTH
♠ K 10 8 6 5 3
♥ A K 8 2
♦ 4 3
♣ 2

The bidding:
North East South West
1 2 2 4 Pass
3 4 4 4 Pass
Pass Pass

Opening lead: Queen of ♠. Some plays look as obvious as it is difficult not to view them as automatic. You will fatten your wallet considerably if you decide staunchly to make no play, no matter how easy it seems, until you have studied the position from all angles.

We think North would have been wiser to slow down the auction by bidding two no trump on the second round. However, four spades would probably still have been the final contract, so we'll concentrate on the play.

West led the queen of clubs, covered by the king and taken by the ace. East found the trump shift. West raked in the queen and ace and led a third round as East parted with two clubs. Declarer was looking at two heart losers and only one parking place in dummy—the jack of clubs. Down one.

This is another case of playing reflexively to a trick, rather than applying reasoning to the problem. Go back to the first trick and see what would happen had declarer followed low from the board!

Bubka wins pole vault, but no world record

OSAKA, Japan (AP) — Sergei Bubka of the Commonwealth of Independent States won the pole vault Tuesday in the 1992 Yomiuri Chitose International Indoor Athletics Osaka meet, but couldn't break his own indoor world record.

Heike Henkel also failed to break her own indoor high jump record of 2.07 metres, which she set last Saturday in her native Germany.

Before the full-capacity crowd of 10,000 at the Osaka Castle Hall in western Japan, the 28-year-old Bubka vaulted 5.70 metres and 5.90 metres, each in one try, and challenged to 6.13 metres, one centimetre above the

indoor world record of 6.12 (20-1) he set in Grenoble, France, on March 23, 1991.

In his third or last try, he almost cleared the bar, but couldn't make it.

Vassily Bubka of CIS was second at 5.70 metres, followed by Tim Bright of the United States at 5.60 metres.

In the women's high jump, the 27-year-old Henkel captured the event, leaping 2.03 metres, 3 centimetres short of her own indoor world record set in Karlsruhe, Germany.

Stefka Kostadinova of Bulgaria, the holder of an outdoor world record of 2.09 metres, was second at 2.00 metres and Silvia Costa of

Cuba was third at 1.94 metres.

In the men's 60 metres, Frankie Fredericks of Namibia won the event with a meet record of 6.53 seconds, breaking the previous meet record of 6.56 seconds set by Ben Johnson of Canada in 1985.

Dennis Mitchell of the United States was second in 6.57 seconds and Hisatsugu Suzuki of Japan was third in 6.72 seconds.

Mark McKoy of Canada captured the 60-metre hurdles in 7.47 seconds, breaking his own meet record of 7.57 he set in 1986. Jack Pierce of the United States was second in 7.83 followed by Makoto Watanabe of Japan in 7.89

seconds.

Participating in the meet were 150 athletes from Cuba, Germany, China, the United States, Romania, South Korea, Namibia, Commonwealth of Independent States, Bulgaria, Canada and Japan.

Bubka, who set world records here in 1986, 1987 and 1989, went into the pole vault competition confident of a new best of 6.13 metres, one centimetre higher than his current mark set in Grenoble, France, last year.

"I was confident of making a new record today. But overall I made a technical mistake," the 28-year-old Ukrainian, now based in Berlin, said.

SPORTS NEWS IN BRIEF

Korda crashes out in Brussels

BRUSSELS (R) — Sixth seed Petr Korda of Czechoslovakia crashed to a 3-6 6-4 6-1 defeat by Swedish veteran Anders Jarryd in the first round of the Belgian Indoor ATP Tennis Tournament. Korda, ranked number nine in the world, dominated the first set and was leading 2-0 in the second when he suddenly lost his grip on the match. Fellow Czech Karel Novacek was more successful, beating Croatian Goran Pripić 6-4 7-6 in a bad-tempered encounter. The amiable Jarryd, in contrast, was not sure what to make of his contest with Korda. "It was a very strange match," he said. "His game suddenly dropped in the second set and I played better. He gave me a chance to come back into the match." The Swede was fifth in the world in 1985 but slipped in the rankings because of repeated knee trouble.

Aberdeen manager sacked

LONDON (R) — Alex Smith was dismissed as manager of faltering Aberdeen Monday, the first coaching casualty of the year in Scottish League soccer. Smith was replaced by Willie Miller, who captained Aberdeen to the 1983 European Cup Winners' Cup and distinguished himself as an international before retiring two years ago. He has since been on Aberdeen's coaching staff. Smith, who played for the side during its glory years in the 1980s and won 65 Scotland caps, was blamed for the team's dismal performance. They lost the Scottish premier division title to Rangers on the last day of last season. Aberdeen have won only three of their last 18 matches and are fifth, 17 points behind league leaders Rangers. They have also been eliminated from two cup competitions. Scotland manager Andy Roxburgh announced the inclusion of two players named Wright in his international squad. Hibernian striker Keith Wright and his namesake Stephen of Aberdeen are included for a friendly international next week against Northern Ireland — the first of five games in the build-up to the European Championship finals in June.

Bobby Robson taken to hospital

AMSTERDAM (R) — Former England national soccer team boss Bobby Robson was taken to hospital Tuesday with an intestinal complaint. The 58-year-old PSV Eindhoven coach may have to undergo surgery, but is expected to resume his duties in three to four weeks, his club said in a statement. His assistant, former Danish international Frank Arnesen, will be in charge of the Dutch champions during Robson's absence. Robson will leave PSV in June when his two-year contract expires.

Advocaat to coach Dutch national team

ROTTERDAM (R) — Dutch national soccer team boss Rinus Michels' assistant Dick Advocaat will see the Netherlands through the World Cup qualifiers, handing over to Johan Cruyff if they reach the 1994 finals. The Dutch Football Association (KNVB) said Tuesday Advocaat would succeed Michels as national coach after the European Championship finals in Sweden in June. Advocaat has signed a two-year contract, leaving the way open for Barcelona coach Cruyff, who captained the Dutch in the 1974 World Cup, to take the helm during the 1994 finals in the United States if they qualify.

Stars line up for Wimbledon warmup

LONDON (AP) — Four of the world's top ten male tennis players have committed to the pre-Wimbledon grass-court event at Queen's Club, London, from June 8-14. American Pete Sampras, two-time Wimbledon champion Stefan Edberg from Sweden, Czech Ivan Lendl and Guy Forget from France will be

McNeil wins in Chicago

CHICAGO (R) — Sixth-seed Lori McNeil of the United States defeated South African Elna Reinach 6-4 6-2 to advance in the \$350,000 Virginia Slims of Chicago Tennis tournament. South African born American Rosalyn Fairbank-Nideffer ousted fifth seeded Gigi Fernandez of the United States 6-4 6-4 in the first day of the week-long indoor tournament at the University of Illinois-Chicago Pavilion. "My game was off," said Fernandez, ranked 18th in the world. "The way she (Fairbank-Nideffer) played surprised me." Top-seed Steffi Graf of Germany, ranked No. 2 in the world, and fourth-ranked and defending champion Martina Navratilova received first round byes. After illness forced her out of last month's Australian Open, Graf will open her year against amateur Rika Hiraki of Japan Tuesday. The second seeded Navratilova opens her bid for a record 15th career singles title against fellow American Halle Cioffi Wednesday. Navratilova shares the record with her retired rival Chris Evert.

2 seeds win in Linz tournament

LINZ (AP) — Two seeded players were among winners in early first-round matches Monday of the WTA \$100,000 ladies' tennis tournament. Czechoslovak Regina Rajchrtova, seeded seventh, defeated Germany's Isabel Cueto 6-1, 6-1, and sixth-seeded Caterina Lindqvist of Sweden beat Katharina Bueche of Austria 6-3, 6-0.

Galloway calls off title defence

LONDON (AP) — World welterweight boxing champion Manning Galloway has called off Wednesday's defence of his title against Pat Barrett at Wembley because of a wrist injury. The 31-year-old left-hander from Columbus, Ohio, announced after taking advice from a medical specialist that he would not fight the Briton. Galloway explained that he had damaged his right wrist during training. "I did it hitting the heavy bag last week and it got gradually worse. It's just a matter of wear and tear," he said. Promoter Mick Duff said that he had known about Galloway's injury Sunday night but had not thought the fight would have to be called off. And he insisted that the American's next title defence must be against Barrett. "I have a bona fide contract with Galloway and the next time he defends his title, it must be against Pat," said Duff.

IBF orders title fight rematch

EAST ORANGE, New Jersey (R) — The International Boxing Federation (IBF) has ordered a rematch between champion James Toney and Dave Tiberi within 90 days due to the disparity of scoring in Saturday's middleweight title bout. Toney won a controversial 12-round split decision over Tiberi in Atlantic City Saturday to retain his title. One judge scored the fight 115-111 for Toney and a second judge has it 115-112 for the champion. But the third judge had Tiberi winning easily, 117-111, an assessment the majority of the crowd seemed to agree with. "Under ordinary circumstances, we don't encourage rematches," IBF President Robert Lee said. "But we felt someone was short changed here because of the wide disparity in scoring on the part of the judges."

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 12, 1992

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Mercury and the Sun square Pluto and the Moon square Jupiter keeping your attention focused on just how to gain the good will of others while holding on to your present position.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Whatever pertains to your work position and activities can be extended now so you will have a greater amount of public skill to use.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You have many outlets by which you can improve your basic new ideas so after this time with courage and confidence even though it may mean a trip.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Think about the various influential persons who can give you data for increasing your assets and a plan of life that makes all take on a glow.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Think over the various highly objective individuals you know who are not swayed by sentiment and get their views for new interests for you.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Look at whatever your duties from the viewpoint of what additional benefits you can secure by doing them with a greater amount of operative skill.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Think on the recreation or enjoyment you want the most and

get a generous associate to give you a lending hand in aiding you to procure this.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Getting into the duties connected with the practical aspects of your home life is your best way to really achieve some desirable results now.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Get into the preparation for some special entertainment to which you have been looking forward for arranging now can make it more pleasant.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Private studies can show you how to increase the value of your assets and the best means by which you can improve your possessions.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You have your best opportunity in some time to gain that very cherished longing that means so much to you so go after it as early as you can.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) A good organizer is ready now to take a good look at your problems and to give you sound advice as to the best means for handling them.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) This is your day to join with the most powerful friends that you seek that they can aid you to obtain now.

THE BETTER HALF

By Harris



"Our fish never argue. I put money in their bowl to see if that changes anything."

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Bob Lee

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

TOOPH

RABIN

CYOUTH

FLOAWL



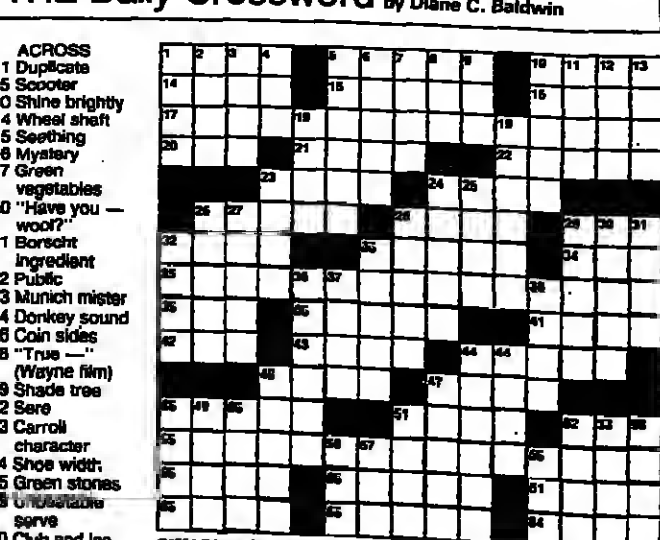
A HOUSEWIFE IS PROBABLY A GOOD INVESTMENT BECAUSE IT'S NEVER SUPPOSED TO BE THIS.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here:

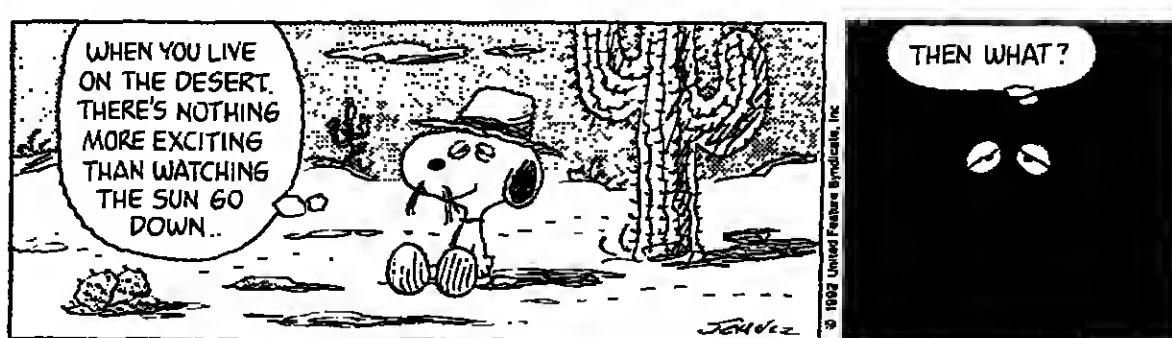
Yesterday's Jumbles: EMPTY WAGER TIMING HOOKUP
Answer: In springtime, a man's thoughts turn to a lot of garden chores he plans to do... WITHOUT

THE Daily Crossword by Diane C. Baldwin



ACROSS
1 Duplicate
5 Scooter
10 Shine brightly
14 Wheel shaft
15 Seething
16 Mystery
17 Green vegetables
20 "Have you — woot?"
21 Borehole
22 Ingredient
23 Public
24 Munch mister
25 Dockey sound
26 Coin slides
28 "True —" (Wayne film)
29 Shade tree
32 Sero
33 Carroll character
34 Shoe width
35 Green stone
36 Unpleasant serve
40 Club and ice cream
41 Trip segments
42 Vermilion
43 Frost offering
44 Trombone
45 feature
46 Orange cover
47 Trap tidbit
48 Canine cousin
51 Legend
52 Victory or Emu
53 Green truth
54 Prevalent
55 Reflection
56 Forty-niners
57 Coward
58 Classified
59 "Kink" and "i" character
60 DOWN
1 —ple (from head to foot)
2 Beasts of burden
3 Drama
4 Certainty
5 Forty-niners
6 Army
7 Treary
8 Vowels for Plato
9 Coming-out girl
10 Train or boat
11 Olympic coaster
12 Singular feat
13 Direction
14 Adam's child
15 Straw hat
16 Cache
17 Padona features
18 Houston sch.
19 Vestige
20 Provided relief to
21 Sparkle
22 Wart straggling
23 Shell
24 Army meal
25 Parity closed
26 Said
27 Furthermore
28 Seek
29 Mealtime
30 Touched ground
31 Forty-niners
32 Prevalent
33 Arch
34 Sean the actor
35 On the briny
36 Take a rest
37 Magazine name
38 Actress living
39 — care

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n' Jeff



Financial Markets

in co-operation with
Cairo Amman Bank

Currency	TOKYO 11/2/92	NEW YORK 11/2/92
Sterling Pound	1.8159	1.8185
Deutsche Mark	1.5753	1.5782
Swiss Franc	1.4165	1.4107
French Franc	5.3903	5.3785
Japanese Yen	126.93	126.78
European Currency Unit	1.2929	1.2956

USD Per STG
European Opening at 8:00 A.M. GMT

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	3.87	3.87	3.95	4.25
Sterling Pound	10.31	10.31	10.18	10.06
Deutsche Mark	9.43	9.43	9.44	9.25
Swiss Franc	7.13	7.12	7.06	7.00
French Franc	9.93	9.93	9.87	9.68
Japanese Yen	5.40	5.15	4.95	4.81
European Currency Unit	10.31	10.31	10.18	9.96

Interbank bid rates for amounts exceeding 1 A.D. Dollars 1,000,000 or equivalent.

Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm	Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm
Gold	355.40	6.75	Silver	4.18	0.09

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.675	0.677
Sterling Pound	1.2280	1.2351
Deutsche Mark	0.4279	0.430
Swiss Franc	0.4789	0.4813
French Franc	0.1256	0.1262
Japanese Yen	0.5324	0.5351
Dutch Guilder	0.380	0.3819
Swedish Krona	0.1177	0.1183
Italian Lira	0.0568	0.0571
Belgian Franc	0.02090	0.02100

Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.7610	1.7700
Lebanese Lira	0.07600	0.07735
Saudi Riyal	0.1797	0.1810
Kuwaiti Dinar	---	---
Qatari Riyal	0.1829	0.1838
Egyptian Pound	0.0200	0.2160
Omani Riyal	1.7280	1.7360
UAE Dirham	0.1529	0.1538
Greek Drachma	0.3650	0.3760
Cypriot Pound	1.4900	1.5150

CAB Indices for Amman Financial Market

Index	8/2/92	Close	10/2/92	Close
All-Share	136.20		136.82	
Banking Sector	109.72		109.61	
Insurance Sector	132.14		133.10	
Industry Sector	175.50		177.20	
Services Sector	153.63		154.44	

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Tuesday.

One Sterling	1.8037/47	U.S. dollars
One U.S. dollar	1.1808/13	Canadian dollar
	1.5890/00	Deutsche marks
	1.7900/10	Dutch guilders
	1.4235/45	Swiss francs
	32.75/79	Belgian francs
	5.4170/20	French francs
	1196/1197	Italian lire
	127.50/60	Japanese yen
	5.7750/7800	Swedish crowns
	6.2330/80	Norwegian crowns
	6.1620/70	Danish crowns
One ounce of gold	355.20/355.70	U.S. dollars

Albania to clamp down on food aid thieves

TIRANA (R) — Albania's caretaker government, struggling to feed a hungry population amid chronic food shortages, says it will clamp down on anyone stealing food aid from abroad.

More than 40 people have died since last November in a wave of looting by hungry Albanians on warehouses stocked with foreign donations of badly-needed basic food.

"All those who have stolen or looted foreign aid should be punished according to law," Ahmeti told a government meeting.

He did not give details of penalties in an apparent warning that thieves will be punished more severely in future.

Thirty-eight looters died in the northern town of Fushe Arrez in mid-December after a warehouse they were plundering caught fire from flaming torches they carried.

At least one civilian and one policeman died in an earlier riot in Lac, northeast of Tirana, in shooting between looters and police.

Albania, slowly emerging from four decades of Stalinist isolation, is suffering chronic shortages of basic foodstuffs, industrial equipment and medical supplies.

Industrial and agricultural production has ground to a halt in many towns. Fear of authority, rigidly imposed by the former communist regime, has been eroded by democratic change.

Ahmeti said large quantities of foreign aid were being held up for too long in warehouses or at ports because of bureaucratic sluggishness.

He called for improved supervision of distribution and the dismissal of incompetent officials.

Scandals saw many quit Japan brokerages last year

TOKYO (R) — Japan's scandal-plagued brokerage industry shrank by 10,000 workers last year, the first decline since 1979, the Japan Securities Dealers Association (JSDA) has said.

Employees at 267 brokerages, including 50 foreign brokers, totalled 156,558 at the end of 1991, down from 166,965 at the end of June 1991, and down from 158,601 at the end of 1990.

Many who left were saleswomen upset by the flood of queries they received from customers about a spate of scandals involving brokerages' improper compensation of elite clients, securities industry sources said.

The drop was especially sharp in the latter half of 1991, after a series of compensation scandals rocked the securities industry, industry sources said.

Shrinking employee bonuses and commissions after a prolonged slump in stock prices slashed company earnings also prompted many to quit, they said.

Still others were let go or resigned early as part of brokerages' cost-cutting plans.

"Many brokerages are struggling to cut costs," one industry source said.

Kohl asks Germans to accept modest pay raises this year

FRANKFURT (R) — Chancellor Helmut Kohl has urged German labour unions to accept modest pay increases this year, saying the country should not live beyond its means.

Addressing a meeting of his Christian-Democratic Union (CDU) party, Mr. Kohl said demands for a 9.5 per cent pay rise by the three million strong German public sector union OETV were unacceptable.

"That — what is being demanded — is completely unacceptable because it does not correspond with the reality of the country," Mr. Kohl told the meeting in Schleswig-Holstein.

"I am not prepared to represent a policy in which we live beyond our means. I see a personal responsibility in this question," he pointed out.

Germany's 1992 public sector wage talks began Friday in Stuttgart. But they ended without any result, and negotiations will resume Feb. 21.

Government negotiators, insisting the 1992 accord be below last year's six per cent rise, are bracing for a tough fight.

A settlement last week in the steel sector, where workers won a 6.4 per cent wage rise just before a threatened strike was due to

begin, will make their position more difficult.

The steel pact was the end of the 1991 round, but economists and the Bundesbank, Germany's central bank, are concerned it could be used as the benchmark for the public sector.

Economists, noting growth in Germany is cooling off sharply under the weight of record high interest rates and the global slowdown, say the entire 1992 wage round may hinge on the outcome of the public sector wage negotiations.

They said moderate deals are essential if Germany is to maintain economic stability and possibly allow the Bundesbank breathing space to lower interest rates later this year.

There is very little room to manoeuvre, said Commerzbank economist Peter Pietsebe. "Reasonable wage settlements are absolutely necessary. Wage increases of under five per cent would be highly desirable."

Mr. Kohl, referring to European Community integration, said it was important Germany "become fit for the future."

He said a reduction in work weeks and lowering the threshold for retirement was "the wrong way to go."

Djibouti premier seeks aid from wealthy Arabs

ABU DHABI (R) — The prime minister of Djibouti said Tuesday his small, impoverished country in the Horn of Africa was seeking urgent aid from wealthy Gulf Arab states to cope with a flood of Somali refugees.

"Civil wars in the Horn of Africa have caused (us) insurmountable burdens," Barkat Gourat Hamadou told Reuters in a telephone interview.

Mr. Hamadou, who arrived in Abu Dhabi Monday after visits to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, said his country, a member of the Arab League, did not have the means to feed and settle the growing number of Somali refugees who were living in ghastly conditions.

"With rampant inflation and very high unemployment, Djibouti is unable to cope with the... refugees," he said.

Officials travelling with the prime minister said the number had reached over 90,000 and was rising as a result of the civil war in Somalia.

Mr. Hamadou, who was flying back home Wednesday, said he discussed the situation in his country with Gulf leaders and they said they were ready to help Djibouti.

The prime minister said Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates had been generous in their aid to the former French colony since it became independent in 1977.

Russians face chronic shortages of equipment

MOSCOW (R) — Russian farmers face a dire shortage of equipment ahead of spring sowing this year, a senior agriculture ministry official said Monday.

ITAR-TASS news agency quoted Vyacheslav Gritysk, head of the ministry's farm equipment division, as saying 200,000 tractors might not be delivered as a result of a breakdown last year in the state-organised supply system.

"Only 20 per cent of (farm machinery supply) contracts have been concluded. Thirty three enterprises, including such giants as the Altai tractor and spare parts factory, are simply refusing to sign them," he said.

"Managers of enterprises producing farm equipment explain their refusal by the lack of metal needed for producing spare parts," he said.

Machinery shortages, combined with a poor storage and distribution system, are largely to blame for inadequate food supplies in Russia and other former Soviet republics.

Mr. Gritysk said farmers were using antiquated machinery and needed 430,000 new tractors for the new planting season.

"If you take into account the problem with fuel supplies, which is the same every year, and the shortage of mechanics, then this spring could be simply unpredictable for those working on the land," he said.

TASS said the high price of farm machinery could also hit this year's crops. A combine harvester costs 1.5 million roubles (\$13,000 at the Russian central bank's market exchange rate), it said.

Many inefficient state and collective farms in Russia are already experiencing acute financial difficulties after years of depending on government subsidies. Russia has warned that loss-making farms will be broken up and privatised.

Russia's Trade Minister Stanislav Anisimov told a news conference Monday that the country was short of fodder and supplies of imported grain were not proceeding well. But he gave no details.

Governor of Bank of Israel digs in economic escape angle to guarantees political wrangle



Jacob Frenkel

TEL AVIV (R) — While the politicians argue over the political strings to attach to U.S. loan guarantees for Israel, the head of Israel's central bank has seized on the U.S. demand for economic conditions — to ensure Israel can repay — as a means to promote economic liberalisation.

Jacob Frenkel, governor of the Bank of Israel, told Reuters he welcomed the decision to set up a joint U.S.-Israeli committee which will set the economic terms and draft guidelines for reforms to Israel's centrally controlled economy.

"The purpose is to identify, articulate and formulate areas in which economic reforms in Israel and policies can be pursued to raise efficiency in the economy," he said.

"We want to deepen these economic reforms... whatever mechanism brings about greater commitment we would welcome," said Mr. Frenkel, an advocate of free markets and former head of research for the International Monetary Fund.

His attitude to a U.S. say in the Israeli economy contrasts sharply with the attitude of his political masters to U.S. attempts to make the guarantees conditional on Israel ending Jewish settlement in the occupied territories.

Justice Minister Dan Meridor said Saturday that linking the loan guarantees and the settlements could set a dangerous precedent for future aid requests.

And Health Minister Ehud Olmert accused U.S. President George Bush Monday of raising new demands to force Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir into rejecting terms for the guarantees.

The guarantees would enable Israel to borrow up to \$10 billion at preferential rates to house and find jobs for a wave of Jewish immigrants, mostly from Russia, that could swell its population by 20 per cent by the mid-1990s.

Critics have accused Israel's political establishment of blocking reforms essential to opening its market and attracting investors. Israel needs to double investment in the next 10 years to absorb the immigrants, they say.

Mr. Frenkel, who is about to

go to Washington to lobby for the guarantees, said the joint committee would ensure the loans are "absorbed and utilised properly."

"This of course requires an economy that is functioning very effectively. We have some ideas about the economic measures that need to be adopted in order to make such an outcome possible," he added.

Discussions in Washington with U.S. Undersecretary of State Robert Zoellick and other administration officials would begin in Washington in the next few days, Mr. Frenkel said.

Mr. Frenkel is also to meet congressmen ahead of Feb. 21 when hearings on the loan guarantees are to open. A congressional decision must be taken by end-March.

In October President Bush asked Congress to delay a decision until 1992, after Middle East peace talks had begun.

Mr. Frenkel, who took office six months ago, said the \$10 billion, half the amount Israel needs to mobilise abroad, were vital to stimulate the economy.

"The guarantees will provide a signal to the market that the United States is willing to provide a vote of confidence in the economic strategy of Israel," he said.

"The real determinant of the flow of refugees into Israel is economic prospects... not getting the guarantees will mean higher unemployment, smaller investments and less growth," he added.

If one million Russian Jews

arrive by the mid-1990s, Israel's population will grow an average of five per cent a year compared with 1.7 per cent in the 1980s. Almost 400,000 immigrants from the Soviet Union have arrived since the exodus began in 1989 but recent months have seen a sharp fall in arrivals.

Unemployment is at a two-decade high of 11 per cent, with the rate among the well-educated newcomers from the former Soviet Union topping 50 per cent in some areas.

Inflation was 18.5 per cent in 1991 and real wages fell about one per cent. Gross domestic product per capita fell one per cent last year while exports fell two per cent.

U.S. officials share Mr. Frenkel's concerns about the long-term prospects for the Israeli economy.

Secretary of State James Baker, testifying to a House of Representatives committee Thursday, said "the likelihood of repayment" was a factor in his negotiations with Israel.

He acknowledged that Israel had always repaid its loans on time but that was so "because we appropriate the money up here with which to repay ourselves."

Some reforms have been taken. Late last year the central bank announced steps to liberalise capital markets and foreign exchange by removing some restrictions on deposits and capital transfers.

But other free market measures such as privatising state-owned firms, reducing inflation and cutting labour costs are lagging behind the stated government intentions.

The state owns about 160 companies, including the main utilities, aircraft and military industries and the national airline El Al. A plan to sell major banks has not materialised.

Mr. Frenkel said the joint committee would lay foundations for interest and principal payments.

"It's very sensible for anyone taking a financial liability to show interest in how funds are used and even more importantly in the capacity of the borrower to repay," the governor added.

New Greek central bank head faces tough task at critical time

ATHENS (R) — Eftymios Christodoulou, who won a reputation as a tough and uncompromising boss at the national economy ministry since 1990, was named Monday to run Greece's central bank in a crucial period for national monetary policy.

He will take over the Bank of Greece with liberalisation of the state-dominated banking system being forced ahead by European Community (EC) directives and the drachma expected to join the EC's exchange rate mechanism (ERM) of currency management at some point next year.

Financial analysts said Mr. Christodoulou, 60, who was appointed central bank chief by Prime Minister Constantine Mitsotakis, must fight Greece's double-digit inflation to get the drachma into the ERM.

Mr. Christodoulou himself told Reuters recently that the drachma should join the ERM as early as possible in 1993, even if the shattered economy is not entirely ready for such a move.

He expressed concern that failure to put the drachma in the ERM risked relegating Greece to second class status within the Community.

Greece and Portugal are the only EC states outside the ERM, which links most EC currencies and is seen as the testing ground for Community plans for a single currency for some states before the end of the century.

Mr. Christodoulou has been a tough enforcer of an austerity plan imposed after the conservatives won a general election in April 1990. He has zero pay rises to state workers for this year.

But despite such moves, inflation has stayed high — year-on-year rate of 18.1 per cent was recorded in January, compared with 22.1 per cent 12 months earlier.

That is a long way from the EC average of four to five per cent and nowhere near striking distance for joining the ERM and keeping pace with EC plans for economic and monetary union.

Mr. Christodoulou inherits a

banking system which is 70 per cent in the hands of the state and years behind the rest of the EC in liberalising capital movements, interest rates or lending.

Although he was widely expected to get the job, a number of Bank of Greece officials have privately criticised him for being more of a political appointee than an experienced economist.

They have expressed concern he could yield to pressure from Mr. Mitsotakis and his former government colleagues over monetary policy, with the conservatives facing increasing opposition to their stringent austerity measures.

Mr. Christodoulou has a degree in economics from Hamilton College in Clinton, New York, and a masters degree from Columbia University.

He replaces Dimitris Halikias, a hold-over from the 1981-89 socialist government and an internationally recognised economist with 35 years at the central bank, eight as governor. Mr. Halikias's term expires Feb. 18.

Under the austerity programme, high interest rates are now falling and inflation is being brought under control. From a high of 19 per cent last September it is now under 10 per cent.

The Philippine economy, battered by a series of natural disasters and the impact of the Gulf crisis, recorded zero growth in 1991, but is expected to bounce back to around 3.0 per cent growth in real GNP this year.

Philippines gets IMF seal of approval

MANILA (R) — The International Monetary Fund (IMF), after seven months of negotiations, has approved the latest Philippine austerity programme, clearing the way for Manila to resume borrowing from the IMF, officials said Tuesday.

IMF Resident Representative Christopher Brown said the IMF's Managing Director Michel Camdessus approved the programme Monday. It still must be approved by the IMF board later in the month, but this is normally a formality.

"Yes, we have the approval," Mr. Brown told Reuters.

The IMF's seal of approval allows the Philippines to go ahead with its proposal to restructure \$5.3 billion of commercial bank debt. The country has total external debts of \$29 billion.

Central bank governor Jose Cuisia will be in New York Feb. 18-19 for talks with the commercial banks on the debt restructuring package, officials said.

The IMF had suspended lending to the Philippines last July after Manila failed to meet several monetary and fiscal targets agreed with the fund in return for a \$900 million stand-by arrangement to bail out the country from an economic crisis.

Protracted negotiations were wrapped up in January, with the Philippines agreeing to a consolidated public sector deficit of 2.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP), and President Corason Aquino's government imposing tough spending cuts.

But resumed lending to Manila was contingent on the Philippine senate approving new revenue measures, and the deficit-ridden National Power Corp. putting up electricity prices by 15 per cent, both unpopular moves in the run-up to May presidential elections.

The second tier of the power increases went into effect this month but the Philippine senate had failed to pass all the tax measures requested by the IMF.

Finance Secretary Jesus Estanislao said, however, that the senate had approved seven of nine tax measures pushed by the government, and this was enough to persuade the IMF that the political will for reform was

there.

The approval unblocks \$100 million in IMF loans in the pipeline. But the real importance is the impact on others, such as the commercial banks and major donors, awaiting the IMF's nod.

IMF approval will allow a meeting of major aid donors grouped in the Philippine assistance programme to go ahead in Hong Kong in March, as well as the rescheduling of more official debt under the Paris Club, Mr. Brown said.

He said that to keep the deficit within target, the government would close the financing gap by

further expenditure cuts, and from higher than anticipated revenue from the sale of Philippine Airlines.

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More aid arrives in CIS

MOSCOW (R) — Muscovites relished their first taste of American food Tuesday, tucking into pork chops, canned corn and vanilla pudding as Western planes carrying more aid supplies landed in republics of the former Soviet Union.

The airlift is part of "Operation Provide Hope," which will fly 18,000 tonnes of food, medicines and other supplies to about 20 cities in the new Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

"I am thankful with all my heart," said Maria Dodporina, 64, eating from a small tin of vanilla pudding at a canteen in southern Moscow.

"I think the food in America is definitely better than it is here," said Mr. Dodporina, an invalid who is accustomed to a modest lunch of soup and brown bread. The canteen is one of 19 in Moscow designated to serve hundreds of thousands of hot meals to invalids, the poor and elderly as part of the airlift that began Monday.

The airlift, plus a government request for an extra \$645 million in aid, followed criticism that Washington's support for economic reforms in the Commonwealth paled beside that offered

by Europe. While elderly Muscovites ate their lunch, volunteer workers dressed in neatly pressed blue uniforms sang American folk songs.

"I am so happy to see all these smiling faces," Ms. Dodporina said. "Usually, when we eat in a public place we have to deal with hostile people who are not interested in smiling or helping us."

European countries are also taking part in the aid airlift. Cargo planes from Germany, Canada, France, Italy, Spain and Portugal flew to former Soviet republics Monday and aircraft from Britain and Greece were scheduled to take off later this week, officials said.

Denmark said Tuesday it was setting up a Baltic supply line to provide 27,000 babies in St. Petersburg with milk powder.

A Japanese naval ship landed in the Far East port of Vladivostok Tuesday, carrying food and consumer goods, said the ITAR-TASS News Agency.

Response to the aid has been generally favourable. A reader on Russia's afternoon news said the republic needed aid to prevent chaos.

"Many things in the Commonwealth depend on foreign relief, namely the implementations of economic reforms and political stability," the newsreader said.

Commonwealth and Western officials acknowledged the airlift was mainly symbolic since much larger quantities of aid could have been sent by land and sea.

"Even in places where American help is guaranteed, it's no good counting on a noticeable improvement in food or medical supplies, since the amount being delivered is tiny," the newspaper Izvestia said Monday.

The operation is an ironic reminder of the Berlin airlift after World War II, when the Western allies flew millions of tonnes of food and supplies to the city during a Soviet blockade.

U.S. publicity over the emergency aid airlift to the former Soviet Union has drawn out Bonn's far greater and more long-term help to its one-time enemy, German newspapers complained Tuesday.

"Monday at Rhein-Main Airport in Frankfurt was nothing more than cheap showmanship," Berlin's Tagesspiegel Daily said about the start of the U.S.-

launched operation.

"It overlooked the fact that planes have been bringing aid from Germany to Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth republics since November 1990," the daily pointed out.

"The help the U.S. has to contribute goes far beyond what they're cheering about now," the Frankfurter Rundschau said. Germany, the largest aid donor to the former Soviet Union, has officially taken a politically positive stand on the airlift, praising it as a sign of international solidarity. Newspapers also lauded the aid as crucial humanitarian help.

But officials made clear Bonn, which sent seven planes from Frankfurt Monday with far less publicity, had already done much more before the Americans launched their airlift.

"Our first plane out Monday was our 302nd flight," a Foreign Ministry spokesman said. "For us, this operation is open-ended. It will go on as long as it is needed."

With great fanfare, the United States dispatched five C-5 Galaxy cargo planes from Frankfurt to the former Soviet Union Monday while seven others left from Turkey for Central Asia.

Kravchuk takes aim at Russian 'imperialism'

MOSCOW (R) — Ukraine warned its giant neighbour Russia Tuesday against "imperial" policies to settle feuds dividing the old Soviet Union's two main Slav states.

Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk staked out a hard line ahead of a Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) summit Friday.

He declared that his republic's sovereignty must come before unity in the group of 11 former Soviet republics.

Mr. Kravchuk told the former Communist Party daily Pravda Tuesday running disputes with Russia over the Black Sea Fleet and the Crimea threatened the future of the Commonwealth, as proclaimed last year to replace the Soviet Union.

He said Ukraine would never submit to a "Diktat" by Russia, issued under the cover of joint Commonwealth policy.

"If there are any attempts within the framework of the Commonwealth to turn back the clock to imperial times, then the Commonwealth can have no prospects for the future."

"In accordance with the will of the people we are prepared to take any actions to resist transformation of the Commonwealth into a state structure" that could infringe Ukrainian sovereignty, Mr. Kravchuk said.

The Ukrainian president, a Communist ideologue turned ardent nationalist, also took aim at what he called Moscow's claim to first-among-equals status, replacing fallen Soviet power with Russian rule.

"It seems that there is only one republic among us that has all the rights — the right to the entire fleet, the entire armed forces to all the embassies and consulates. And all the others are deprived of this right."

"We cannot agree to this and we never will," his bitter comments reflect frustration after Russian dominance over Ukraine doing back hundreds of years and underscore the cultural and political fragility of the Commonwealth without Soviet central control.

In a bow to personal diplomacy, however, Mr. Kravchuk sought to exempt Boris Yeltsin from direct criticism, suggesting instead it was the Russian leader's "circle" that backed a perceived anti-Ukrainian line coming from Moscow.

Mr. Kravchuk said relations between the two leaders — the most influential of Commonwealth presidents — were good, nurtured by once-a-week telephone conversations and other contacts.

Mr. Yeltsin has suggested a face-to-face summit with Mr. Kravchuk for Feb. 15, one day after the 11 Commonwealth leaders meet for a summit in the Belarusian capital Minsk. The Ukrainian has yet to reply.

Yugoslav truce under strain after clashes kill 4

BELGRADE (R) — Three Serb irregulars and one Croatian Guardsman were killed in the biggest outbreak of fighting in Yugoslavia since a U.N.-brokered ceasefire began five weeks ago, Croatian and Belgrade media said Tuesday.

The clashes in eastern Croatia Monday night added strain on the truce negotiated by United Nations special envoy Cyrus Vance on Jan. 3 between Croatian militias and Serb forces backed by the Yugoslav army.

Belgrade-based Tanjug News Agency said three Serb irregulars were killed and two others wounded in an attack by Croatian forces in a Serb-controlled region of eastern Croatia.

Tanjug quoted Rade Leskovac, deputy information minister of the Serb-dominated Croatian region of Slavonija, Baranja, and Western Srem, as saying Croatian National Guardsmen opened fire around villages in an area near Vinkovci and Vukovar.

"This is the biggest attack mounted by Croatian forces in the area since the signing of the 15th ceasefire," he said.

Croatian radio said one Croatian guardsman died and two were injured when Serb irregulars launched an artillery attack in the same area.

Croatian commanders said it was the fiercest assault by Serb forces since ceasefire began. They said mortars were also fired in and around Vukovci but Croatian

militia halted the attack, Croatian radio reported.

It was not immediately possible to obtain independent confirmation of the reports.

The fragile truce has just about held despite sporadic violations in frontline areas in eastern and western Croatia and flashpoints on the Adriatic coast.

The European Community has expressed fears that the truce could collapse and wants U.N. peacekeeping troops to be deployed in Croatia as soon as possible.

U.S. Secretary of State James Baker and German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher held in Germany Monday they hoped U.N. troops could be stationed in Croatia very soon.

U.N. officials said last week the ceasefire was secure enough for the deployment of 10,000 peacekeepers — one of the conditions for a U.N. peace plan to be put into effect.

Tanjug also reported gunfire in the port of Dubrovnik on the Adriatic coast and said one Yugoslav federal soldier suffered gunshot wounds in the village of Goruja Truvara near the Belgrade-Zagreb Motorway in central Croatia.

Many Yugoslavs consider the U.N. plan the last hope of averting further bloodshed in a seven-month conflict which has killed 6,000 people. They believe violations could increase with the onset of warmer weather.

I did my best — Aquino

MANILA (R) — President Corason Aquino, accused by her critics of failing to provide strong leadership, said Tuesday she had done the best she could amid coups and natural disasters in the Philippines.

"I could not have done what I did in any other way," she declared during a lunch with the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines. "I did my best," she said.

The president will step down at the end of June after six tumultuous years, having survived six coup attempts and contended with a string of natural disasters that hit the South East Asian country.

Mrs. Aquino, 59, catapulted to power in a 1986 revolt that toppled the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, said she planned to write her autobiography in retirement and work for a charity.

She admitted to few mistakes. "If you are going to wait for me to tell you where I made a mistake, I will not," she said with a grin.

But she admitted that given a second chance, some of the people she brought into government would not have been chosen.

"Perhaps in choosing people in government, I must confess that I did make some mistakes in that regard," said Mrs. Aquino, without naming names.

But she said one reason for this

was because there was no transition period when she took over from Mr. Marcos.

She was unable to move into the presidential palace for two weeks, while it was cleared of possible explosives or mines.

"I did not have the benefit of time. We were in fact a coalition and I had to naturally address the requests and concerns of the members of the coalition," added Mrs. Aquino, widow of assassinated Philippine opposition leader Benigno Aquino.

She said she never regretted becoming president, despite the string of coup attempts launched by rebel soldiers, who accused her of being indecisive and soft on the Communist insurgency plaguing the country.

Admitting she was "really very nervous" during the coup attempts, Mrs. Aquino said she was also "determined to just stay on and to hold on, and not to leave Malacanang."

"There are times probably when I feel sorry for myself, but now that my retirement is close at hand I do not even think about that any more," she said.

Mrs. Aquino said she had endorsed former defence chief Fidel Ramos as her favoured successor because he was the one most likely to continue her programme of helping the poor, and building cooperatives and people's organisations.

Reynolds elected new Irish premier

DUBLIN (R) — Albert Reynolds was formally elected Tuesday as Irish prime minister to replace Charles Haughey, who resigned after becoming embroiled in a 10-year-old telephone tapping scandal that returned to haunt him.

Mr. Reynolds, sacked as finance minister last November by Mr. Haughey after leading a failed party mutiny, won a parliamentary vote by 84-78, closing a tempestuous era in Irish politics.

The rebel, who returned from the political wilderness to win a leadership contest last week in the ruling Fianna Fail (Soldiers of

Destiny), is expected to make major cabinet changes to revive the flagging coalition government.

With Fianna Fail's popularity at an all-time low, Mr. Reynolds takes power with unemployment at a record high and Northern Ireland plunged into a bloody new round of sectarian killings.

Mr. Haughey, who survived a string of financial scandals and leadership challenges in his career, stepped down after his former justice minister said Mr. Haughey knew about the tapping of journalists' phones in 1982. The Progressive Democrats, the

small party that shores up the coalition, said Mr. Haughey must go or it would propel Ireland into its fifth general election in 10 years.

Mr. Reynolds, whose business career ranged from owning ballrooms in the 1960s to running his own pet food factory, was once dubbed "the singing cowboy" for dressing up in full cowboy regalia to sing a country and western song on television.

During Mr. Reynolds' two years as finance minister, Ireland enjoyed an economic boom which rapidly ended with the Gulf war.

Bomb scare disrupts central London

LONDON (R) — Suspected Irish guerrilla bombs closed the heart of London Tuesday just hours before a visit by U.S. Vice President Dan Quayle and security talks on Northern Ireland chaired by British Prime Minister John Major.

Police said they had deactivated and removed a device found in a telephone booth in Whitehall.

"The bomb might have gone off," Home Secretary (Interior Minister) Kenneth Baker said on television.

The device was found barely 100 metres from 10 Downing Street, the residence and office of British prime ministers. But Mr. Major, at his office as usual, insisted that it would not interfere with Tuesday's Irish talks.

A bomb squad was also called to the Welsh office where another suspect package, which was later found harmless, was spotted.

Police said they had received telephoned warnings that included a code. The Irish Republican Army (IRA), which is fighting to oust Britain from Northern Ireland, uses special codes to authenticate its warnings.

Mr. Quayle was not in Whitehall at the time of the bomb scare but was due to go to the Foreign Office, partially evacuated, in the afternoon and would later dine with Mr. Major.

Wales: West made mistakes in dealing with Poland

WARSAW (AP) — President Lech Walesa said Monday that the West should do more for the new nations emerging from the former Soviet Union than it has done so far.

"We counted too much on the West," he said in an interview. Mr. Walesa has mainly criticised Europe for a lack of action. Last week, in a speech to the Council of Europe, he accused the West of "making good business" out of Poland's revolution, while giving little back in terms of investment.

On Monday he said those comments were meant only as "a warning" so that Western countries do not repeat the pattern in their treatment of the former Soviet republics. That, he said, could bring a retreat from democracy or even violence.

He also stressed that he had been addressing Europe. "We don't have much to complain about" concerning the United States, he said.

According to Mr. Walesa, Western Europe is guilty of flooding Poland with goods while doing little to help modernise factories and create employment — steps that would bring long-term political and social stability.

He said Poland might be a bad investment in the short term, but good for the long run — and the same lesson should apply in the former Soviet Union.

Gunman invades Japan ruling party HQ, surrenders

TOKYO (R) — A lone gunman forced his way into the headquarters of Japan's scandal-plagued ruling party and demanded that it give up power but surrendered later Tuesday, police said.

The young man, carrying a sword and wearing a headband and sash emblazoned with the nationalist rising sun emblem, was bundled into a police van outside the building in central Tokyo.

Police later said he had been formally arrested, charged with carrying weapons. They said other charges might follow.

The seven-hour drama began

shortly before nine a.m. when the man, identified as extreme rightist sympathiser Osamu Aihara, fired a shot at the entrance door of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) head office, breaking a window pane.

He then walked up to the fourth floor and occupied the room reserved for party President Kiichi Miyazawa, the prime minister. Tuesday was a national holiday in Japan and neither Mr. Miyazawa nor other top party officials were in the building.

Police later joined Aihara in the room and tried to persuade him to surrender but he was "very nervous and pensive," making progress difficult, a policeman said.

Police speculated that he finally gave himself up because he was tired and saw no other course of action.

Outside the white nine-storey LDP building, about 100 metres from parliament, the street swarmed with blue-helmeted riot police and patrol cars. Grey riot trucks blocked access.

The man had taken no hostages and no one was hurt. He spread a little kerosene around in the

room but did not try to light it, a policeman said.

Branding his pistol and the long Japanese sword, Aihara had demanded to see leaders of the conservative, pro-business LDP, which has ruled Japan in unbroken power since 1955.

He later abandoned this demand but stuck to four others — disband the LDP, embroiled in the latest in a series of political funding scandals; get back four islands off northern Japan now ruled by Russia; fight against communism and reform the education system to bring it back to its patriotic past.

White House.

Using the comforts of the incumbency to the fullest, Mr. Bush will then board a helicopter and fly off to New Hampshire for a whirlwind day of campaigning.

New Hampshire's primary is the first presidential test of the year, and Mr. Bush faces an unexpectedly tough challenge in the economically ailing state from Mr. Buchanan.

It is generally agreed Mr. Bush must hand Mr. Buchanan a sharp rebuke in New Hampshire to enable him to turn his attention to the Democratic rivals.

U.S. Vice-President Dan Quayle said Monday he would be President Bush's running mate in the November presidential election.

"I will be his running mate... you can count on it," Mr. Quayle, on a two-day visit to Britain, said in a television interview.

There had been some doubt whether Mr. Bush would choose Mr. Quayle for a second term.

Liz Taylor plans Disneyland bash for 60th birthday

LOS ANGELES (R) — Elizabeth Taylor is planning a 60th birthday extravaganza on Feb. 27 for 1,000 guests, including many of Hollywood's biggest stars, at Disneyland near here, her spokeswoman said.

Spokeswoman Chen Sam said the evening birthday bash was being organised by Mr. Taylor's new husband, Larry Fortensky, and a group of friends. Disneyland will be closed to the public just before the party and security officers will scour the area for those hoping to stay behind and crash the party. Guests will be treated to foods and wine from around the world served on tables draped with deep purple, after Mr. Taylor's "deep purple" line of perfumes, Sam said.

Italy to fight railway thieves with portable phones

ROME (R) — Train drivers and ticket collectors have been given portable telephones in an attempt to stem a wave of thefts on Italian railways. Transport Minister Carlo Bernini said. He told parliament more than 4,000 people were charged with theft by State Railway Police in the first six months of 1990 — some 500 more than in the first half of the previous year. In one case, thieves used sleeping gas to knock out well-heeled travellers on the Paris-Venice Simplicon Express. In another, German tourists arrived without their luggage after a gang uncoupled the baggage wagon of a Munich to Rome Express. Mr. Bernini said the phones would help staff communicate better with each other and with stations.

Valentine CD is Japan's latest love potion

TOKYO (R) — Forget the chocolates, the sexy phone calls, the knock-out dress. A Japanese woman pursuing her ideal man this Valentine's Day just needs 1,000 yen (\$8) to buy him a new compact disc, relax and let this latest "love potion" do the rest. The "Valentine CD" consists of four love songs — and a subliminal message. The words "Love Me More And More," played at a sound frequency just outside the range audible to humans, are repeated some 5,000 times over 15 minutes. They permeate the listener's consciousness and, supposedly, make him fall for his benefactress. "Lots of young women are calling saying 'I would be nice if he liked me ...' and asking where they can buy it," said a spokeswoman at Sanrio, the novelty goods store that invented the Valentine CD. "But we don't guarantee that the man will fall in love," she added. The CD went on sale at the beginning of February and Sanrio hopes to sell 40,000 Valentine's Day, Feb. 14. The spokeswoman said the subliminal message worked only with male listeners.

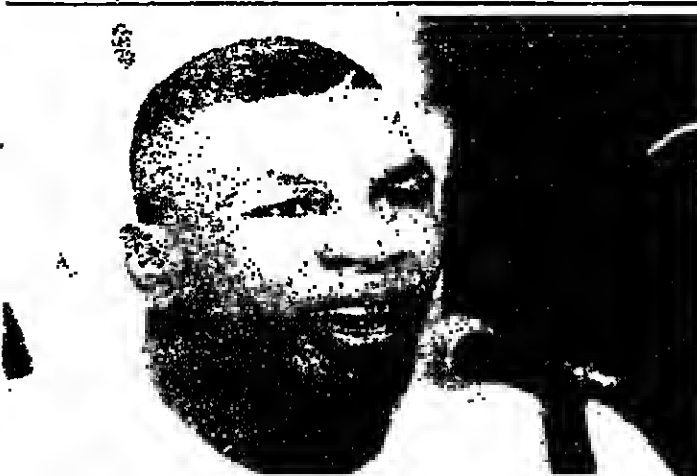
Casio to sell watch that measures blood pressure

TOKYO (R) — Japan's Casio computer said Monday it would start selling a watch which can also measure blood pressure. "All you have to do is put your finger on the wrist watch," a company spokesman said. "Two sensors inside will then gauge the blood pressure." The spokesman said it took only 30 seconds to measure blood pressure. The watch, which goes on sale on Feb. 24, will cost 19,000 yen (\$150). The company plans to export it worldwide and produce 20,000 a month initially.

Money, not bomb in suspicious briefcase at airport

SANTIAGO, Chile (AP) — Rookie police officer Jimmy Lavin says he was "very nervous" as he opened an abandoned briefcase at Santiago's airport — thinking it might contain a bomb. There was no bomb in the brand new leather briefcase, but it did contain \$25,000 in American, Chilean, Bolivian and Venezuelan bank notes. Mr. Lavin, 22, says he had no doubts whatsoever, and immediately reported the finding to his superior officer.

The owner of the money was quickly found by police. Alejandro Urbina said he forgot the briefcase after flying in from Africa, 2,000 kilometres north of this capital city. He told police he brought the money to start a business in Santiago.



Mike Tyson

Tyson convicted of rape

INDIANAPOLIS, Indiana (R) — Mike Tyson, who became the youngest world heavyweight boxing champion in history, faces jail for raping a beauty queen — and an end of his ring career.

The rape conviction virtually dooms any prospect of a boxing comeback, although his lawyers plan an appeal in a bid to avoid a sentence of several years jail. The trial prosecutor implied that the guilty verdict sent a warning message about the rampant libidos of some U.S. sports stars.

Tyson, who rose from a New York ghetto to take the title at 20, was convicted of one charge of rape and two of deviate conduct, charges carrying a possible sentence of 60 years.

If the fighter's expected appeal is unsuccessful, he is likely to get six to 10 years as a first offender and with good behaviour would probably serve half that time.

Judge Patricia Gifford will hold a pre-sentencing hearing on March 6 when character witnesses are likely to plead for leniency towards the fighter.

The jury of eight men and four women took just over nine hours to reach their verdict.

The 25-year-old former champion, free on \$30,000 bail pending the expected appeal, is to appear in court Tuesday for a probation hearing. The judge confiscated his passport.

The 18-year-old victim, in Indianapolis to compete in the Miss Black America Pageant, testified she was lured into Tyson's hotel room on July 19 and raped. She said Tyson pinned her to the bed and laughed, causing her "excruciating pain." Her claims were backed by physical evidence introduced at the 13-day trial.

Victorious prosecutor Greg Garrison implied that the verdict sent a message regarding the behaviour of sports stars.

"We have seen so many times that it doesn't matter what a superstar does, it's okay. This one time this behaviour was not tolerated — at least not in this country, at this time." He apparently referred to recent stories of the sexual activities of U.S. sports stars.

"We're not popping any champagne corks," he said, adding the victim "was a young person with

a lot of courage." The woman was not in the courtroom when the verdict was announced.

"There are two lives that have been irrevocably changed here and to some extent marked forever," Ms. Garrison added. "So I'm not sorry for him because he did what he did, and to that extent he asked for it. But I have compassion on him and I hope there's a better day out there for him."

Tyson's attempt to regain his title, lost exactly two years ago in Tokyo to James "Buster" Douglas, is probably over. No major promoter or cable television network or casino was judged likely to stage a Tyson fight now that he is a convicted rapist.

Tyson would have fought in the richest fight ever against champion Evander Holyfield. The estimated \$100 million fight had been set for Nov. 8, but Tyson hurt his rib.

Holyfield, interviewed by Cable News Network (CNN), made clear he would not be prepared to fight a Tyson convicted of rape. "I don't think it's right for me to fight anybody who has been charged and guilty of such a crime," he said.

Even before the jury returned to Courtroom 4 of Marion County Superior Court, Tyson seemed to know he was in trouble. He arrived well before any of the defence or prosecution teams and sat alone at the defence table in the centre of the room.

Tyson seemed to wince as the guilty verdict was read three times. He appeared a shell of the fighter who had terrorised the heavyweight division for six years, the ferocious, hard-hitting, snarling fighter with a 40-1 record.

He looked like an overgrown boy, neck bulging from his shirt. His lawyer pleaded that Tyson not be sent to jail immediately as the prosecution asked.

"Mike Tyson was a time bomb on the way to happening. It just happened in Indianapolis," said Bert Sugar, editor of Boxing Illustrated magazine.

Mr. Sugar was referring to the slew of legal troubles Tyson managed to get into in recent years, including several lawsuits alleging inappropriate sexual advances to women.

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